

# MIDSTREAM

A QUARTERLY JEWISH REVIEW

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- CHARLES REZNIKOFF

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JACOB B. AGUS • S. SHUNRA • BERNARD ROSENBERG • DARIUS MILHAUD

## *From the Four Corners:*

EDWIN SAMUEL • JULIUS HORWITZ • ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

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## Statement of Purpose

**T**HE THEODOR HERZL FOUNDATION has been established as an educational agency to promote the study and discussion of problems confronting Jews in the world today. Two overwhelming changes in the context of our Jewish existence—on the one hand, the destruction of one-third of world Jewry, which has erased many political and cultural landmarks, and on the other, the rise of the State of Israel, which has opened broad new horizons—call for a reexamination of basic concepts and the ways to Jewish fulfillment. Equally grave and equally difficult to answer in traditional terms, are the fateful questions that face a world aghast at the threat of its own annihilation. It is against this background that MIDSTREAM, A Quarterly Jewish Review, has been conceived.

In sponsoring MIDSTREAM, a Zionist publication, we are committed, above all, to free inquiry. We conceive Zionism as, in essence, a questioning of the Jewish *status quo*, and as a steady confrontation of the problems of Jewish existence. It is our hope that MIDSTREAM will offer critical interpretation of the past, a searching examination of the present, and afford a medium for considered and independent opinion and for creative cultural expression.

MIDSTREAM is not an official organ, nor do the publishers and editors necessarily identify themselves with views expressed in its pages. It is, rather, our purpose to enable a wide range of thought to appear in the columns of this magazine.

THE THEODOR HERZL  
FOUNDATION, INC.

# MIDSTREAM

A Quarterly Jewish Review

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# From the Four Corners

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## Dachau—1955

By JULIUS HORWITZ

The train runs almost hourly from Munich to Dachau, a twenty-three minute ride. The round trip costs a little over two marks. The train runs through flat green country dotted with red-roofed houses.

You expect to see a black flag flying over Dachau, or a thunderstorm to break. But the Dachau station is a quiet suburban stop. There are no souvenir cards of the concentration camp, of the stacked bodies the newsreels made familiar to the world, only cards of the great twin-towered church of Munich. I stopped at a tobacco shop and asked, "Which way is it to the concentration camp?" "Two kilometers," the man at the shop said and pointed down the road. "Cross over the bridge, then turn left."

Dachau is tree-lined, green, the houses solid. I walked by the houses, looking at the pillows and down quilts hung out to air. I kept looking for the barbed wire fence of Dachau. I knew I would have to see a great wire fence with high tension voltage, gun towers, the barracks where the victims were stored for burning.

I came to a gate. A German soldier wearing an American service troop patch on his shoulder stopped me. I showed him my passport. I walked inside but immediately saw that it was an army installation. I had heard Dachau was a national park, an exhibition area. I didn't expect it to be occupied and in use. GI's were cutting the grass and policing the area. I asked a sergeant, "Which way is it to the concentration camp?" "Down the road, past the dispensary building, turn left and you'll come to the crematorium," he said.

I followed his directions and found myself in the GI guardhouse area instead. I asked a T-sergeant, "Which way is it to the concentration camp?" "You'll have to go out and down the road, then you won't miss it, you'll see two crematoriums; you know what they are, that's where they

used to burn everybody." "What do they say about it here?" "Hell, they say it never happened, they'll tell you they didn't know a damn thing about it, but you can smell those bodies every time the wind blows, about four hundred thousand bodies—you've got guys still working in this town who were in this place." "It's fantastic," I said. "Fantastic! I worked with the War Crimes Commission for twenty-four months. I've seen these people see everything there is to see and they still say they don't know anything about it. They know; every time the wind blows they know."

A German service guard with a gun stands at the entrance to the crematorium. You pass a ditch, a wire fence that used to carry ten thousand volts, a stone wall, machine-gun towers. The crematorium is across the road from the ditch, the stone wall and the wire fence.

The crematorium is a low building with a tall brick chimney. The building looks small for the enormity of its existence. Outside it is a stone plaque ringed with a heavy black chain. The inscription reads: Old Gallows Stand.

The first sign you read when you enter the crematory reads: Corpse Collecting Point. The room is bare and empty with gray and white walls. You enter the next room and here the sign reads: New Crematory. Four stoves like great baking ovens stand here, but the doors to the ovens are very narrow, just wide enough for one body. In the next room the sign reads: Death Chamber. Fifteen spouts point out of the ceiling. The next sign reads: Undressing Room, and over the door, in German, is the sign: *Brausebad*. The signs outside the crematorium point to Grave of Many Unknown Thousands, Ash Grave, Pistol Range For Execution, Execution Range With Blood Ditch, . . .

The New Crematorium is the largest room. Flags from the countries of the dead hang on the wall, and garlands of flowers with ribbons which are beginning to fade. A short, stocky Italian from Trieste, a tourist, looks into the oven and



exclaims, "Bandits! How?" he asks me, "How?" His face, I am certain, has the same look I can feel on my own face, of a disgust that makes you want to retch. He knows the terrible privilege of being able to look.

Three American soldiers come into the crematorium with a very blond German girl in a strapless summer dress. They enter the gassing room. One of the soldiers looks at the drains in the floor and speaks with a Texas drawl, "Was this where the gas came up from?" "No, from the ceiling," he is told. "Then this must have been for the vomit," he speculates. The wall is broken on several sides. "I think this is where they looked through to see them die," the soldier adds. "They piled them in." "People?" the German girl asks. "People," the soldier says. "Take it easy, honey, you haven't seen anything yet." They pass into the room of four ovens. "See this, honey, this is where you Germans did the baking." "Baking?" "Burning people, that's all you Germans had time to do here was to burn people." "You shouldn't say such things," she protests. "The ovens are here, honey, that's what they were put here for, to burn people." "You, you shouldn't say such things to me," the blond girl says and rushes out of the crematorium.

The German girl comes down the gravel path, her hair blond, her skin white, her strapless dress bulging out her breasts. She stops in front of the grave where the ashes are buried. "What do you think of it?" I ask her, as though she can give an answer. "You won't believe this," she says, "but I didn't know a thing about this until today. I was only ten, maybe eleven, when it happened. I didn't know anything about it." "But people must have known," I said, "with so many millions being killed." "Millions!" she says, "Not millions!" "The German government kept a record of every person killed." "But we didn't know anything about it. My father is an engineer. We have a big house in Munich. A lot of people come to our house. My father has a good position in Munich, he knew a lot of people during the war. My father would know, and he didn't know anything about this." "He didn't?" "I didn't know until today when my friend brought me here." "But the people knew who did it; somebody had to know." "We didn't know," she repeats. "All right," I said, "you didn't

know. But now that you do know, what do you think?" "That," she said, "is private."

The soldier came up and said, "Let's go, honey, you've seen enough."

A Ford Mercury pulled into the driveway. An American army major got out with his wife and daughter. A German family walked up the gravel path to enter the new crematorium. The old crematorium is a much smaller building with less ovens. But the ovens seem to be larger and are thickly insulated—"To keep the heat in," the major explained to his wife. The ovens have a tiny peep-hole and you find yourself insanely saying it's to see if the bodies are done.

The German guard said I couldn't cross the bridge leading to the buildings of Dachau which is now a DP camp. I said I just wanted to see the road and he let me cross the bridge. I followed the stone wall and the wire fence that used to contain ten thousand volts. Alongside the road are green fields. Farther back are the town houses.

The barracks in Dachau are long; their outer walls are plastered with cement, giving them a permanent look. The main street of the concentration camp area is wide, lined with tall incongruous trees, and has a barren look. The area is now a camp for European DP's from behind the Iron Curtain; the barracks have been turned into one-room units. Men sit on wooden benches, women sit on the stoops, faces follow you when you walk.

I went up to one man and asked, "Is this where the concentration camp was?"

"Yes, this is *the* Dachau," he said in English. "People live here yet. There's a factory here," he pointed to some brick buildings. "That's where the SS troops lived. Here's a German from Dachau, ask him, he's living here now." He pointed to a pale man in his twenties who stood leaning out of the window of his one-room unit. "Ask him what you want and listen to what he says."

I asked the Dachau German, "You were here, then?"

"Not in the camp. I lived in the town of Dachau."

"You lived in Dachau?"

"I was a little boy then, only ten."

"What did you know about the camp?"

"Just that people were kept here."  
 "What were they kept here for?"  
 "I didn't know, I was only a little boy then."  
 "Didn't your mother and father talk about the camp?"  
 "Not to me."  
 "But somebody must have talked about it!"  
 "My uncle was an SS man, yet we did not know about it in the house."  
 "What did your uncle say?"  
 "Nothing about the camp. He was afraid to talk. Everybody was afraid to talk because then you would be tapped on the shoulder and, 'Come along with me.'"  
 "So you didn't know."  
 "We didn't know."  
 "But you know now."  
 "Now," he said blankly. "Did you see the crematorium?"  
 "Yes," I said, "I saw the crematorium. You didn't know anything about it?" I asked again.  
 "I was only ten."  
 "He's lying," the first man said in English, "they all knew."  
 "When the wind blew," I said to the German from Dachau, "what did you smell?"  
 "We didn't know what it was."  
 "But you saw smoke."  
 "There was smoke."  
 "Did you see the Jews coming into Dachau?"  
 "Once they marched the prisoners past our house. We didn't have much to eat but my mother threw them some potatoes. They fought in the road for the potatoes and ate them, skin and all, but we didn't have much food then."  
 "What do you think now of Dachau?"  
 "What could we say if we didn't know and we were afraid?"  
 "He's lying," the first man said again.  
 A breeze stirred and we thought we detected the smell of burning bodies. "You can smell the dead," I said.  
 "Yes, that's it," the first man said.  
 "Did you know this smell?" I asked the German from Dachau.  
 "No," he said. "No."

## South African Dilemma

By EDWIN SAMUEL

**H**ow do South African Jews react to the increasing racial tension in this country? I am in a fairly good position to judge, as I have just come back to Johannesburg as a University guest lecturer, after an earlier tour of the country eighteen months ago. The deterioration in the situation is very marked.

South Africa is full of hatred and fear: between the Afrikaans- and English-speaking Europeans, between the Europeans and the natives. The Afrikaans-speaking Nationalists now in power in Parliament continue to insist on depriving the Cape colored (the progeny of mixed European and native parents over the last three centuries) of their constitutional right to direct representation in Parliament on a common roll and to relegate them to the status of natives, who have no right to vote. As this right of the Cape Colored to vote is entrenched in the Constitution, a two-thirds vote of both Parliament and Senate sitting together is needed to cancel it. As the Nationalists have failed to get that two-thirds vote, they have now decided to increase the number of Senators from 40 to 70, in order to give them the requisite majority. As such a constitutional change is bound to be challenged in the Appellate Court (equivalent to the United States Supreme Court), the Nationalist Government has used its overwhelming majority in Parliament to increase the number of Appellate Judges from 5 to 11, and to pack the Court with Nationalist supporters who can be counted on to vote the right way.

A new Passport law has been passed, giving the State power to refuse to allow anyone—European or native—who seriously opposes the present regime, to travel abroad. There is no secrecy of the mail or of telephones any more. Although the higher courts still show some independence, one bastion of liberty after another is falling.

Bantu (native) education has been taken out of the hands of the missionaries and concentrated in the hands of the State (dominated by the Dutch Reformed Church), thereby eliminating the influence of the Anglican Church, which is

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Mild breezes have thawed a little of the ice of the Cold War which has kept the world in its grip in recent years. RICHARD H. S. CROSSMAN, Labor Member of the British Parliament, former member of UNSCOP and recognized authority on Middle East problems, feels that the time is ripe for a reduction of tensions in the Middle East, if only the Western Powers desire it.

## Toward Arab-Jewish Peace

By R. H. S. CROSSMAN

**T**he year 1955 has seen a miraculous change in the international climate. Twelve months ago, such phrases as "the cold war," "the Iron Curtain," "the military containment of Communism" and "massive retaliation" not only expressed the policies of governments but corresponded to the realities of the situation. Now, both in Moscow and Washington, the sense of an inevitable conflict, and the internal social tensions which that sense produced, have rolled away like a heavy, oppressive cloud. The cold war has been called off—at least for the time being; the Iron Curtain is being pierced in both directions; and peaceful co-existence, however difficult its application may be, has been accepted as the only condition for human survival in the thermo-nuclear age. Anyone who searches for the precise causes of this clearing of the political atmosphere is likely to find very different answers if he puts the question in the United States or in the Soviet

Union. Each side assumes that it was always reasonable and attributes the melting of its opponent's intransigence to the success of its own diplomacy. But the main thing to notice is that the change has occurred in defiance of all the probabilities and the predictions of the pundits.

There is an obvious reason why, in discussing the problem of Israel's future, I should start from this transformation of the world situation. Those who assert that Israel's relations with her Arab neighbors cannot be improved, that the blockade under which she suffers must continue, and that the mutual antipathy rules out any peace settlement should be reminded that the similar predictions about the East-West conflict, which were being made so confidently only a year ago, now look very foolish. In modern politics there are no inherent contradictions, no ineradicable hatreds and no disputes which cannot be settled once there is a will on both sides for peace.

Yet the fact remains that there is one area in which the easing of East-West tension has produced no *détente* whatsoever. The Iron Curtain which sunders Israel from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt has always been far more impenetrable than that which divided the Communist and non-Communist worlds. Since Israel's independence was declared more than seven years ago, no Jew has visited the Wailing Wall. No Israeli, unless on a retaliation raid, has crossed the frontier into Syria, Lebanon or Egypt. To speak of "cold war" here is a gross understatement. What we have witnessed for seven long years is a state of active but suppressed hostilities, waged by all the Arab States by every military, political and economic means available, against a State whose very existence they still do not admit. If the steel of the Israeli nation was hardened in the forge of war, that steel has never been permitted to cool. Israel must be the only State in the world whose people have not known a single day or a single night of peace.

**E**ver since May 1948 the Middle Eastern experts in the State Department and in the Foreign Office have complacently argued that time would heal the wounds created by Israel's war of independence. Once they had persuaded the French to join in the tripartite guarantee, the British and American Governments regarded their obligations to the new State as amply fulfilled, and in their dealings with the Middle East they have concentrated their attention on their traditional interests in the area: (a) the strategic interest, which has for generations required Britain—and which now requires the United States—to prevent Greece, Turkey and Iran from falling under Russian control, and (b) the economic interest, which demands that what is now the main oil reserve of the world should remain in Western hands. Up to 1948, successive British Governments

sought to safeguard these interests by maintaining bases in Egypt, Jordan and Iraq and by policies designed to keep reliable pro-British cliques in power, both in these countries and in Iran, while France pursued a similar policy in Lebanon and Syria, and the United States confined itself to benevolently encouraging the activities of the American oil companies in Saudi Arabia. There was not before 1948, and there never has been since, any coherent Western policy towards the Middle East. On the contrary, it has been the arena for the kind of underground intrigue and diplomatic maneuvering, punctuated by explosions of overt hostility and covert breaches of faith, which has provided Communist textbooks with a classic example of imperialism.

The only kind of politics of which the Arab leaders have any experience is the art of exploiting the dissensions and rivalries of the three Great Powers that signed the tripartite agreement, and of extracting from those Powers the highest price possible for services rendered. When we accuse these Arab leaders of irresponsibility or charge them with bad faith, it is as well to remember the example which Western diplomacy has set them. So, too, when Mr. Dulles or Sir Anthony Eden solemnly tells the Israeli Government that, now that the U. S. A., France and Britain have given their solemn word in the tripartite guarantee, Israel can have no reasonable ground for alarm, it is as well to remember how many solemn pledges have been broken in the history of the Middle East since 1918, and how regularly the Great Powers have been ready to sacrifice principles and promises to strategic expediency since they assumed responsibility after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

True, the United States has only quite recently entered this field of power politics. But already it has shown by its con-



duct that duplicity is not a monopoly of British and French diplomacy in dealing with the Arab-Jewish problem. Those who fondly imagined that that problem had been settled by the outcome of Israel's war of independence, and that the armistice lines had been frozen into frontiers of the new State by the tripartite guarantee, were merely deceiving themselves. What has really happened is that since 1948 the pattern of Western behavior towards the Arabs has reverted to type, with the result that the struggle for sheer existence of the Jews of Palestine, which began during the Arab revolt of 1936, has not been ended by the creation of the new State but merely translated into a new form. So too, the appeasement of the Arabs, first by Neville Chamberlain during the 1930's and then by Ernest Bevin after 1945, has not ceased. It is merely being pursued under the new conditions by Mr. Dulles and Sir Anthony Eden.

**T**hese words may seem harsh and exaggerated to readers in the United States or Britain. But they express the cold truth, as seen by almost any Israeli. As a result of British and American policy, the future of the State of Israel, which seemed to have been assured by victory, is once again in doubt. Only four years ago the watch-word of Israel was Independence, and Ben-Gurion, far too dynamic to accept a passive neutrality, evolved a policy of non-participation, not unlike that of Marshal Tito. Now, what was once applauded as independence is unhappily described by Israeli politicians as isolation. The Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee publicly proposes that Israel should apply for admission to the British Commonwealth, and even Ben-Gurion told me on a recent visit that he would like his country to be as close to Britain as New Zealand would be if she were not a member of the Commonwealth. I am sure that visiting American Con-

gressmen are told a similar story. Israel would like a treaty of alliance either with the United States or with Britain or, if possible, with both — anything to end the feeling of isolation.

The cause of this feeling is obvious enough. With its back to the sea and facing a desert of Arab hatred, Israel consists of four frontiers with virtually no hinterland. First, in the North there is the relatively quiet frontier with Lebanon, the only Arab State which would make peace with Israel if it dared. Then, to the North-East, along the Huleh Swamp and the far side of Lake Tiberias, is the Syrian frontier, where the dispute about the control of the Jordan water may well flare into actual war this summer. Thirdly, there is the 400-mile long festering wound of the frontier with Jordan. This starts just below Tiberias; runs down the Jordan Valley; bulges towards the sea to keep the Judaeen hills in Arab hands; and then, south of the Dead Sea, divides the desert along the line of the Wadi Araba to the Gulf of Akaba. Along every mile there is endless infiltration and pillage. Fourthly, there is the impossible appendix of a frontier at Gaza, where, in a strip of Palestine 25 miles long and 7 miles wide, 240,000 Palestinian Arabs under the control of the Egyptian Army regard infiltration as a patriot's duty.

Even if there were a formal peace, these four frontiers would be intolerable to both Jew and Arab. In fact, they are merely temporary Armistice demarcation lines, and since 1949 the Arab States have refused even to begin negotiations for a peace treaty. Instead, they have (1) imposed a successful trade embargo — including the closing of the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Akaba to Israeli shipping; (2) blackmailed U.N.R.W.A. into spending millions annually on keeping the refugees as refugees instead of resettling them; and (3) declared their determination to restore those refugees to their lands in a Second Round. So the



new State of Israel is economically besieged, physically harassed by infiltration, and psychologically suffocated by an ever-tightening cord of Arab hatred.

The reaction to all this has been an agonizing reappraisal, which has split Israel across party lines into two contending factions — Activists and Co-existers. The storm center of this conflict is Mapai, the official Labor Party, which dominates every Government coalition; and it is in the Mapai Executive that the real struggle is taking place, with Mr. Sharett pleading the case for moderation. Mr. Ben-Gurion, though he undoubtedly sympathizes with the Activists, has been careful not to commit himself to either side.

**I**n terms of logic, the Co-existers have the best of the argument. Retaliation raids, they say, may improve the morale of the inexperienced immigrants from the bazaars of Baghdad and the concentration camps, who are trying to farm in the new villages. But there is no evidence that they have pacified the frontiers, and they certainly upset the American Jews on whose dollars Israel's economy depends. Mr. Sharett, who was born in Palestine and served in the Turkish Army, believes that the future of Israel depends on two things — integration into the Arab world and support from the U. S. However impossible the Arab behavior, and however dangerous the new American policy of linking Iraq and Turkey and rearming both, Israel, in his view, has no choice but to pursue the path of collaboration with the West and restraint in the face of Arab provocation. If she relies on her own strong arm, she will repeat the tragedy of the Maccabees.

Moreover, Mr. Sharett can point out that, so far, self-restraint has paid dividends. The internal social and economic problems, which looked so overwhelming a few years ago, are being mastered. Raging inflation is being checked by a harsh New Economic Policy, and the in-

evitable concessions to free enterprise have been courageously accepted by the Socialist leadership of the trade unions, despite the emergence of a small class of rich profiteers, which is one of its unsavory consequences. The problem of resettlement of areas deserted by the Arabs is now being tackled soberly and with rather more success, after some costly and spectacular initial failures. Finally, thanks largely to the superb educational work of the Army (every boy and girl does thirty months' full-time military service and is recalled for at least a month a year until the age of 35), the new immigrants are being integrated into the nation. This internal stability is a remarkable achievement, and the Co-existers can reasonably call it in as evidence when they appeal for coolness in meeting the external danger. I cannot think of another instance in modern history where a small, newly constituted State has doubled its population in its first five years with immigrants, often of dubious quality, while retaining the form and the spirit of Western democracy.

Nevertheless, Mr. Sharett, though he has all the arguments of prudence on his side, is fighting a losing battle against the rising tide of Activism. Israel came into existence by a fantastic act of faith. In defiance of Ernest Bevin, and disregarding the warnings of Weizmann and Truman, Ben-Gurion proclaimed the State on the day that the five Arab armies invaded it—and the gamble paid off. So, too, during the war, it was by a series of adventurous campaigns, often in defiance of the Armistice officials, that 2000 square miles were added to the 5600 allotted to Israel by the U. N. Partition Plan. And it was by boldly shooting down five British planes that Israel brought the Labor Cabinet to its senses and achieved a *de facto* recognition. In their brief history as a nation, the Israelis have never gained anything by "prudently" relying on the pledged word of either Britain or Amer-

ica. Indeed, if they had been prudent, they would have been wiped out in the summer of 1948. The strength of Activism derives, first, from the fact that it worked in 1948 and, secondly, from the growing recognition that the Foreign Office and the State Department are as untrustworthy and objectively as hostile to Israel's survival in 1955 as they were six years ago. That hostility, as the Activists point out, is demonstrated in three ways.

1. *Treaty Relations.* The U. S. A. has signed treaties of military assistance with Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq. Britain maintains her traditional treaty with Jordan, has signed a new agreement with Egypt, and recently adhered to the Turkish-Iraq Pact. Yet, despite this complex of military alliances with the Moslem States, neither the U. S. A. nor Britain has so far been willing to consider a mutual assistance pact with Israel.

2. *Arms.* Britain spends approximately £10,000,000 a year on the Arab Legion, and is supplying Iraq and Egypt with modern equipment. The U. S. has agreed to give military assistance to Iraq sufficient to increase its army to four divisions. All this is done despite the fact that the Arabs flout the terms of the Armistice by maintaining a state of war with Israel.

3. *Refugees.* In the Gaza strip, and all along the Jordan frontier, hundreds of thousands of refugees are deliberately kept in their miserable camps and all attempts to resettle them are sabotaged by threats that the refugees will lose their lands in Israel if they settle even temporarily elsewhere. Thus U.N.R.W.A., to which Britain and America are the main contributors, is being openly used not to heal the wounds of war, but to perpetuate the war situation and prevent a peace settlement.

This Anglo-American policy, according to the Activists, is not so very different from that of Mr. Bevin. Instead of tolerating an armed attack on an almost defenseless community, we are now per-

mitting the Arabs to besiege and harass Israel, and preventing the Israeli from breaking out.

Here we come to the second (and usually unspoken) premise of the Activist case. Today, Israel is capable of mounting an offensive which will carry her armies either across Syria to Damascus or across the Judaeen hills to the Jordan, or across the desert to the Suez Canal. Moreover, in the present state of Arab disunity and corruption, any one of these campaigns could be completed without fear of a major counter-attack elsewhere, unless Britain or America intervened. The Activists do not, of course, suggest that such a campaign should be undertaken, but they do ask why Israel should not get tough with Britain and America and threaten to break out unless appeasement of the Arabs is stopped.

When I put all this to Mr. Sharett, his answer was clear and convincing. Of course the Israeli Army could clear the Judaeen hills and reach the Jordan within three weeks. But what then? There are only three possibilities. Either to kill the 800,000 Arab refugees who now live west of the Jordan, or to incorporate them in Israel, or to drive them into Transjordan as refugees. Since none of these three possibilities can even be contemplated, there is no answer to this logical defense of Co-existence. An Activist strategy, such as a very few Israeli soldiers propose, would lead to immediate disaster. An Activist diplomacy of talking tough to America would be a bluff which could only too easily be called. What makes this controversy so bitter is that each side is right in pointing out the futility of the policy advocated by its opponents. Britain and America are compelling Israel to choose between a suicidal attempt to break the noose and an acceptance of death by slow strangulation.

What, then, should be done? I myself can see no serious objection either to an

Anglo-Israel or to an American-Israeli mutual security pact. When the case has been argued here in the Commons, I have received the same unconvincing reply, first from Sir Anthony, when he was Foreign Secretary, and now from his successor, Mr. Macmillan. Israel, they tell me, is quite adequately guaranteed by the Tripartite Declaration. As for the British treaties with Arab States, these are not concerned with the Jewish-Arab deadlock but are related exclusively to the defense of the Middle East against external aggression. The weakness in this reply is obvious. If Britain and America seriously desire to organize the military defense of this area against Communism, why do they rely on Arab forces of dubious quality and leave out of account by far the most effective army in the whole Middle East? The only two countries in this part of the world which can be reckoned on to resist Communist aggression effectively are Turkey and Israel. Yet, while Turkey receives military assistance and is a member of NATO, Israel is deliberately excluded from all the regional security arrangements. Indeed, to emphasize the discrimination, the British have been attempting to build a base in Cyprus and for this reason to deny the island self-determination, thereby creating not merely a state of civil war in Cyprus itself, but a first-class international crisis with Greece and Turkey. Why, it must be asked, should Britain choose an island without harbors and with a population hostile to the British connection, as its military base, instead of strengthening her military ties with Israel, which possesses a friendly population, a first-rate port and, as was proved in the last war, the skilled workers necessary for a military base in time of war?

**O**ne has only to ask these questions in order to elucidate the real motive of British policy. Any kind of close military association with Israel would cause

violent repercussions in the Arab capitals and almost certainly undermine the position of such pro-British leaders as Nuri Said in Baghdad. British strategy is therefore based on the assumption that, whereas Israeli assistance can be reckoned on in the case of war, the Arabs must be wooed and their anti-Zionist feelings assuaged. It is the policy of the 1930's all over again.

As for American policy, I cannot claim to be conversant with its purposes or methods. This is not in itself surprising. What is surprising is that the British Government and the British Foreign Office are frequently equally mystified. One of the main difficulties in dealing with the Arab-Jewish problem since 1945 has been not only the hiatus between Washington and London, but the suspicion in each capital of the designs of the other. Though it may seem incredible to the American reader, I believe that one constant purpose of successive British Governments in this area has been to persuade the United States to take its share of the political and military responsibility for its defense. A determination — often a singularly blind determination — to maintain Britain's status has been combined with a bitter resentment that America should draw the profits of oil without contributing a soldier to its defense, and that insult should be added to injury by a stream of often inconsistent American advice from the sidelines. Ill-informed public opinion in Britain has tended to believe that the United States has been trying to squeeze Britain out of the Middle East, and at the time of the Anglo-Iranian crisis it was hotly alleged in the Commons that the State Department and Aramco had egged the Persians on. Again, during the long-drawn-out Suez negotiations, it was widely believed that Ambassador Caffery's interventions had made the task of reaching agreement far more difficult. Yet the Foreign Office, at least, knows perfectly well that one main preoccupa-

tion of American policy has been to avoid being inveigled by the British into the assumption of direct responsibilities outside Saudi Arabia.

These British suspicions were assuaged by the very helpful role played by the United States in the last phase of the Persian oil crisis. But they flared up again quite recently, after the announcement that Nuri Said intended to sign the pact with Persia. It was appreciated in London that the United States had for long been skeptical of the efficacy of the Arab League either as a political unit or as the basis for the military defense of the Middle East. Yet the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, under which Suez was evacuated, was based precisely on this presupposition, and the Turkish-Iraq pact was immediately assumed to have been inspired from Washington. Certainly it fitted in very well with the American view that, instead of relying on the Arab League, the aim of the West should be to integrate Iraq into the security system which has been gradually built from Greece, through Turkey and Iran, to Pakistan. Here again, therefore, there was evidence of cross-purposes between London and Washington. Whatever the military value of the pact, it threw the whole Arab world into the bitterest discord, and forced the Nasser government, which was being tactfully wooed into Western co-operation, to swing back towards an isolationist neutrality. The fact that Britain finally adhered to the Turkish-Iraq pact does not mean that she wanted it in the first place. What Sir Anthony did was to retrieve something from the wreckage by using this opportunity to settle the awkward problem of the British base at Habbaniyah before the Anglo-Iraq pact ran out.

**I**f I am right in my assumption that American policy is concerned to organize the military security of this area with the minimum direct American com-

mitment, then it is clear that the United States does not wish to squeeze Britain out, but only to persuade the British to abandon policies which have demonstrably failed. From this point of view, it is difficult to see why Washington should seem to share London's objections to a military pact with Israel. Have Americans learned nothing from Britain's mistakes? Or must we assume that every Anglo-Saxon who mixes himself up with Middle Eastern politics automatically begins to share the prejudices of the Foreign Office Middle East Department? The answer probably is that there are still discordant voices in Washington and that the conflict between the White House and the State Department, which caused such fantastic confusions in 1947 and 1948, has not been completely resolved. The State Department's view approximates to that of the Foreign Office, whereas the White House, owing to the political pressure to which it is subjected, is compelled at least to try to see the Jewish as well as the Arab case. This is why I should hazard the guess that in a pre-election year the chances of an American-Israeli security pact are better than those of an Anglo-Israeli pact. Mr. Eisenhower may do the right thing for the wrong motives.

I would not deny that, in the short run, a military security pact with Israel, whether signed by Britain or by the United States, would antagonize the Arab States. Yet, on the other hand, if we are determined, as I believe we are, to prevent a Second Round being launched by the Arabs and to ensure the survival of Israel, then it is high time that we made that intention *unambiguously* clear. We hardly do this by conniving at the blockade of Israel. Nor are we likely to convince the Arabs of our support for Israel by entering into new military alliances with them, despite these glaring violations of the armistice terms. Although the short-run repercussions of a



security pact would be unpleasant, in the long run it would, I believe, achieve its purpose of compelling the Arab States to accept the *fait accompli* of Israel's existence, and gradually to come to terms with it.

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the signature of such a treaty, either by Britain or by the United States or by both, would be a sufficient contribution to peace in the Middle East. Indeed, its only effect would be a negative one, the removal of the Arab illusion that, if they wait long enough, Britain and America will permit the destruction of Israel. Once this illusion has been removed, the vacuum must be filled by a positive policy of conciliation. Here again we must observe the disingenuousness of Washington and London. In both capitals one hears a great deal about the need for a final settlement between Israel and her neighbors. Indeed, Sir Anthony has frequently assured the Commons that, if a settlement of the three great problems of water, frontiers and refugees could be achieved, Britain would be willing to guarantee it formally. But the blunt fact is that such a package settlement is completely out of the question. If we wait until Jew and Arab agree upon these three questions, we shall wait till Doomsday. The only chance of moving towards a peace settlement is gradually to transform the climate of the Middle Eastern cold war, just as the climate of world cold war has been transformed in the last eight months, by a series of small actions, each of them in itself of minor significance but yet cumulatively building up mutual confidence between the two sides. This can only be done if we are prepared not to regard the Arab States as a single, united bloc but to take notice of the dissensions which have divided them more violently than ever since the Turkish-Iraq pact was signed. If Iraq is adamant, that in itself is a reason to believe that Egypt will not be

quite so adamant and Syria will be uncertain. As for Jordan, it is absurd for any Englishman to pretend that its policy towards Israel cannot be slowly and tactfully improved by discreet pressure from London.

One particularly intractable problem which can be handled in this way is that of the refugees. It is surely impossible to deny any longer that the preservation of these unfortunates in their miserable plight has now become a vested interest of the Jordan economy, as well as an ideological obsession. U.N.R.W.A. officials will frankly admit in private that they no longer bother to try very hard to tackle the problem of resettlement, because they realize that it is British and American policy not to upset the political apple-cart in Amman. This means that millions of dollars are being paid each year by the British and American taxpayer, not to heal the wounds of war but in order deliberately to keep those wounds open and transform them into a festering sore. There is no doubt whatsoever that, if Britain and America were prepared to make their further contributions to U.N.R.W.A. expressly conditional on resettlement and rehabilitation being made a reality, they could begin to move this mountain. I do not deny that the effect would be explosive and dangerous, but there are some obstacles which can only be removed by a charge of dynamite. I am sure that, in the case of the Arab refugees, mere persuasion is futile. Though it may be risky, an explosion must be tried. Its evil effects in Amman would be limited by the fact that the Jordanian politicians realize their economy depends on the £10,000,000 subvention to the Arab Legion.

Lastly, there is the problem of the distribution of the Jordan waters by the riparian powers, which has been dealt with most recently and most successfully by Mr. Eric Johnston. An Arab-Jewish



agreement on this single issue could begin to transform the whole political climate of the Middle East. Such an agreement is only possible if the Israelis are ready to accept far less than what they regard as their objective share of the water. In their own long-term self-interest they would be well advised to regard the first negotiated settlement between themselves and their neighbors as worth a great deal of water. If Washington and London should take the risk of applying pressure to the Arabs on the refugee issue, they should also be prepared to apply an equal and opposite pressure in order to prevent a rejection by Israel of any solution which Mr. Johnston puts forward.

It is only if some success is registered on the problems of refugees and water

that it would be wise even to raise the issue of frontiers. I do not myself believe that Israel can make any major concession of territory. On the other hand, there are a large number of minor frontier rectifications, in favor of Arab villages which have lost their lands, that would be conceivable once the atmosphere of cold war was replaced by that of peaceful co-existence. Peaceful co-existence would also require the concession by Israel of some form of transit rights between Jordan and Egypt, as well as access by Jordan to a free port in Haifa. But it is positively harmful even to discuss such ideas until Britain and America have concerted a common policy for the defense of the Middle East and a common approach to the Arab-Jewish problem.

Whether the apparent goodwill between East and West is a passing thaw, or the beginning of a permanent and far-reaching change in international relations, remains a perplexing question. ELIEZER LIVNEH, editor of *B'terem* and until recently a member of Knesset, analyzes the prospects for the future and the pre-conditions for a permanent relaxation of tensions between East and West.

## Soviet Policy in Europe

By ELIEZER LIVNEH

**I**n February 1955, the heads of state in Moscow changed: Bulganin, the political general became premier, replacing the communist party functionary Malenkov. Immediately there was apprehension in the free world lest Russia return to her earlier aggressiveness. On February 13, 1955 I wrote in *Davar*: "The official leadership of Georgi Malenkov was only intended as a transitional stage. Now events have come to a head. The attempts of Moscow to attain a strategic and political crystallization more to her liking, by weakening the Atlantic Pact and perhaps destroying it in part, did not succeed. France withdrew from the arrangement. Western Germany entered into it. The first steps toward a pro-western alignment were taken in the northern part of the Middle East. In the Far East, communist and pro-communist progress came to a halt. There seemed to be no way to further expansion, neither by limited wars nor by diplomatic pressure. The advantages arising from lack of agreement with the West were dwindling. During the period from March 1953 to February 1955 Moscow tried to gain by diplomatic 'softening up' what she had not succeeded in gaining in the previous period of political and military aggressiveness. This experiment failed, or at best was halted. The strategy of 'softening up'

had exhausted its potentialities. The time had come to try negotiation. The changes in Moscow came in order to prepare the ground for this attempt.

"The world will probably be shaken in the coming weeks by simulated Soviet threats. There will no doubt be synthetic lightning and thunder . . . but before many months pass we will no doubt hear about a meeting of the Big Three, with or without their associates. It is more than likely that the first meeting will consist of the Big Three only. The World War II comradeship will again be praised, and on the heels of sentimental recollections will come more practical talk . . .

"For some time the center of gravity in the Soviet ruling class has been shifting from the party bureaucracy to the military leadership (which historically is also communist). The upheaval in Moscow is an additional outstanding symptom of this shift."

At the time the above was written my surmise seemed far-fetched. But it was not long before it became reality. Let us therefore examine the historical and political background for this development, and what we may expect of Soviet foreign policy in the near future.

The Yalta agreements of February 1945 served as the basis for Soviet policy in Europe during the decade 1945-1955.

These agreements placed under full Russian control all of Eastern Europe, the Balkans (excluding Greece) as well as most of Central Europe. Whatever may have been the motives of Roosevelt and Churchill when they drew the partition line across Germany, the Soviets were guided by military and industrial considerations. For this reason they included Saxony and Thuringia in East Germany. The presence of uranium in Czechoslovakia compelled them to add this country to their area of control. The communist revolution in Prague in February 1948 completed this process.

It is difficult to explain Stalin's policy in Europe from 1945 to 1952 as other than a deliberate and obstinate attempt to subject the rest of Europe to Russian control. This attempt was not hopeless at the time. It rested on two basic foundations: 1) The overwhelming Soviet military superiority in Europe, and, 2) The strength of the communist movements in the countries outside the Soviet sphere. Other factors contributed to the Soviet hope. The United States and Britain quickly demobilized their forces after the war; France ceased to be a great military power, and on the entire continent of Europe, Russia was not faced by a single first rate military force. On the other hand there were strong mass communist parties in France and Italy capable of seizing power even by parliamentary means, especially since the pressure of the nearby Soviet army exerted a "persuasive" influence on the masses and the tired intellectuals of these countries who were prepared to make any sacrifice in order to avoid a new war. Stalin's basic international strategy consisted of two supplementary elements: Expansion in Asia mainly by military means (China, Korea, Indo-China) and expansion in Europe primarily by means of political pressure from within and without. The social and economic instability that prevailed in Europe immediately after the war was expected to pave

the way for communist domination without war and even without much bloodshed. This strategy was successful in large areas of Asia and was almost successful also in Europe. It seemed to be a cheap and easy road to victory involving no risk of becoming embroiled in a war, no great expenditures, and not even any serious friction with the U. N. The cold war—constant tension in foreign relations and persistent aggressiveness of the communist parties within the foreign countries—this was the overall framework of the Soviet plan for the subjugation of Europe.

**T**he Stalinist strategy for the subjugation of Europe failed, but not all at once. It took five years, from 1948 to 1953 for this strategy to prove bankrupt. Soviet expansion in Europe reached its peak in 1948 when Russia gained domination over Czechoslovakia. But that same year also brought the first blow: Yugoslavia's defection from the Cominform sphere. This was a major political and strategic setback, for it destroyed the possibility of further Soviet expansion in that area. Indeed, shortly after the Yugoslav "treachery" the communist revolution in Greece was put down and the Soviet press and political offensive against Turkey came to a standstill. The international significance of Yugoslavia's defection had still further ramifications. Russia's unreadiness to take up arms against Tito, either with her own forces or with those of her satellites, gave rise to a feeling throughout Europe that on *this* continent at least Russia did not intend to make use of her very real military superiority. It is difficult to exaggerate the moral boost which the Yugoslav example provided for the shaky self-confidence of the central and western European countries late in the 40's and early in the 50's. For a long time the Yugoslav example demonstrated that the urge for national independence among sound nations func-

tions as much under communism as it does under capitalism. The Soviet leaders learned this lesson and applied it to their own advantage in their relations with the communist rulers of China.

The failure of the Soviet blockade of West Berlin, or rather Russia's failure to take military measures against the breaking of the blockade by the western airlift, confirmed the general feeling that the Soviet offensive in Europe would remain "cold" and limited to social, economic and propaganda pressure. Under conditions then prevailing, even this pressure was quite effective. In the field of propaganda the pressure took the form of the "peace movement" which offered peace as payment for following the Soviet foreign policy. Economically the pressure took the form of shutting off Soviet Europe both as a market and as a supplier of free Europe. The social pressure was exerted through the communist parties and their affiliates. The propaganda pressure never became a real danger, but the economic blockade almost wrecked the Yugoslav economy, and the communist parties in France and Italy nearly paralyzed their governments.

The Yugoslav "treachery" and the failure of the blockade of West Berlin halted the Soviet political offensive in Europe. From this point on it turned into a retreat, slow and scarcely noticeable at first but constant. The defeat was caused by three interrelated factors: Marshall Plan aid, the Atlantic Pact, and the quick economic resurgence of Germany. The Marshall Plan rebuilt the war-torn economies of the central and west European nations; it helped reestablish social peace, and it effectively stopped the further growth of the communist parties. Ever since 1949 all the communist parties in free Europe have been consistently on the down grade (with the strange exception of Iceland). During the first five years of its development, NATO provided concrete substance to the plans for the defense of Europe.

Though its actual military accomplishments were not enough to overcome the Soviet military superiority on land, nevertheless little doubt remained that in the military field time favored the West.

But the most unexpected factor was the *tempo* of the economic resurgence of West Germany. Throughout the period of the cold war, divided Germany occupied the center of the European stage by the very logic of the situation. America and Russia competed in rehabilitating their respective parts of Germany by methods characteristic to themselves. Europe was confronted with a simple question: Who would be more successful? Russia with its communist totalitarian methods, or the United States with its liberal capitalism? By the early fifties there no longer remained even a shadow of a doubt as to the result of this competition. The revolt of the East Berlin workers against the Soviet rulers in the summer of 1953 (and the Soviet mildness in suppressing the revolt) was a socio-political echo of the outcome of this competition. Strategically the economic resurgence of West Germany meant that its re-armament had become a problem to be seriously considered. The beginning of this re-armament, as a result of agreements reached in London and Paris in 1955, was a natural consequence. Moscow reacted to this in a manner that had become routine during the cold war: Vociferous threats before the agreements were reached, and acceptance of the situation once it had become a fact.

But the new situation contained one possibility to which no twentieth century Russian could remain indifferent—that Germany might once again become a great military power. The fear of such an eventuality, combined with the internal changes within Russia, prompted the great change in Moscow's foreign policy.

**W**hat changes of attitude were meantime taking place within the upper strata of Soviet society? There is no doubt

that Stalin himself did not modify his views to any appreciable extent. From the war years 1939-1945 he probably learned that a rearmed Germany has its perils, but even this is not certain, for in his last writings he stated that "subjugated" Germany and Japan would not long tolerate their present status, and that in the end the capitalist world would be laid low in a war between these two "oppressed" nations on one hand and the "imperialist" Anglo-Saxon powers on the other. In such a new conflict the Soviets would, of course, draw on their past experience and remain on the sidelines longer than they had in the Second World War. It would then not be too hard to administer the *coup de grace* to the two contending capitalist opponents, and the world communist revolution would be realized in accordance with orthodox Leninist prophecy about the inevitable contradictions in the capitalist camp and the revolutionary exploitation of the possibilities provided by these contradictions. In their contacts with the western world during 1941-1945, Stalin and his advisors learned that the west was still too powerful technologically and that it would not be wise for them to risk a showdown by force, but that the western leaders were sufficiently naive (or insecure) to surrender one position after another. Stalin's meetings with Roosevelt no doubt strengthened his convictions in this regard.

Stalin's wartime concessions to the peasantry, the intellectuals, the Church, and the non-Russian nationalities were emergency measures, and were mostly rescinded after the war. Only the Church retained its gains, largely for purposes of infiltration among Greek Orthodox groups abroad. The meager liberties that were permitted in literature, art, and speculative thought were mercilessly repressed after the war. The "party line" again ruled supreme. All contacts with the outside world were more severely proscribed than ever before. The Iron Curtain was

drawn tight. If there was any change at all in this period in comparison with the 1935-1941 era, it expressed itself in the addition of chauvinist obscurantism to the permanent communist dogma. Economic planning was primarily directed to fostering heavy industry and developing the raw materials required by it. Regional planning aimed to move the industrial center of gravity to the Urals, Western Siberia and Turkestan—as far as possible from potential air and land attacks.

At first the Kremlin rulers felt that this new totalitarianism was bringing desired results. Great wealth flowed to the Soviet Union from many parts of the world in the form of all kinds of direct and indirect reparations from the defeated countries, and still greater tributes from the new allies. Commercial treaties between the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies were planned to exploit the national economies of these countries to the advantage of Russian "planning". Indeed, it is possible that the Yugoslav rift might not have occurred had not the Soviet rulers overdone their policy of exploitation. The Russian masses, weary from the war, were more passive than ever. The war heroes were removed from key posts. It seemed that all discontent had been subdued from East Berlin to Vladivostok.

**B**ut in the early fifties new symptoms made their appearance in the Soviet Union. When the flow of booty from outside came to a halt, the harmful absurdities of total planning (bureaucratic arbitrariness, for instance) became apparent. The people began to demand a greater share of the fruit of their labor. Veterans who had been impressed by the wonders of capitalist productivity could not understand why the victors had to live in worse conditions than the conquered. The economic blockade against free Europe, which had been devised as a means to bring Europe to its knees, had reverse effects. The counter-measures of the west



further aggravated the difficulties of the Soviet Union. The anti-western propaganda aimed to convince the long-suffering Russians that their hardships were unavoidable if Russia was to be adequately prepared against the western war mongers. But the "war mongers" failed to show signs of aggression, and the Soviet propaganda began to arouse distrust, and a great longing for peace. It is doubtful whether the communist peace propaganda was as successful anywhere as in Russia itself.

It is doubtful, however, whether the yearning for peace and for normal civilian life could by itself have become an effective political lever, had not the ruling class in Russia attained crystallization and the ability to demonstrate its will. The Bolshevik Revolution promised a classless society, but any revolution that aims to do away with classes usually gives rise to new upper classes which are sometimes worse than their predecessors who in the course of generations had learned the limitations of power. The Russian Revolution was no exception in this regard. As long ago as the thirties new social and economic ruling strata began to take shape in the Soviet Union. Industrial executives, army commanders, administrative bureaucrats, scientists, professional party functionaries—these and similar categories began to enjoy distinct and permanent social and economic privileges, and were able to transmit these privileges to their children. The mass invasion of key posts by members of the lower classes which characterized the first period of the revolution was slowed down and later came to a virtual halt. From time to time the terror and the fear of the secret police undermined the self-confidence and hindered the integration of this new ruling class. (This was the social and political significance of the purges of the thirties.) It is difficult to tell how matters would have turned had Stalin lived longer. In his last years he tried to remove the high mili-

tary commanders from all key political posts without liquidating them physically as he had done in the thirties. But after Stalin died the beneficiaries of the revolution breathed more easily—relatively speaking—and undertook to realize their hopes. These were: physical and legal security, social and economic stability, enjoyment of technological progress, the relaxation of fear and also a measure of freedom to think, to study and to create. But their chief hope was peace, for without peace none of the foregoing could be realized.

Russia's achievements in the field of atomic research and technology further strengthened the desire for peace and for an accommodation with the west. For whether these achievements were the outcome of spying on the west or the results of original research they had one effect: an ever growing number of people in key posts became convinced that atomic war meant destruction for all concerned and that in the final analysis the advantage lay with that side which had overall technological superiority.

Two distinct stages are discernible in post-Stalin Russia: the liquidation of Beria and Bulganin's rise to the premiership. The liquidation of Beria was primarily significant from the standpoint of Russian internal affairs insofar as it led to the removal of the secret police from its dominant position. The rise of Bulganin marked the culmination of internal integration and a maturing of the desire to negotiate with the outside world even at the cost of significant changes in the status quo in Europe. Some time will pass before the world learns what happened in Moscow from the time when the new rulers, with the help of the army, liquidated Beria's police apparatus and substituted "collective leadership" in its stead, until they decided to raise Bulganin to the premiership and to embark on serious negotiations with the west. During Malen-

kov's premiership, Soviet policy still clung to the Stalinist territorial and strategic ambitions, though these were espoused with greater finesse. The Kremlin became more courteous without altering its basic aims. Peace with Austria was postponed as before; the threats against European countries to prevent them from signing a defense agreement with Bonn continued and the anti-American propaganda was not toned down. When Malenkov was removed and Bulganin and Zhukov were brought to the fore it was widely thought that this period of Soviet courtesy had come to an end; but the reverse proved true. The previous formal courtesy now acquired political substance. The period of serious negotiations began.

Is it an accident that the date of this change coincided with Soviet disillusionment in its ability to prevent the rearmament of Germany by means of threats and pressure? It is almost certain that there is a close connection between these two developments. In any case, Moscow now tried to attain this aim by means of real compromises and serious negotiation. The new influence of the military commanders in Russia was due to both internal and external considerations. The external consideration was that negotiation with the west fundamentally involved military problems; according to the new "division of labor" in Moscow military men are responsible for these.

Germany is the core of the European problem, from any standpoint. There is no doubt that the resurgence of Germany as a military power constitutes a threat not only to Russia. This threat is now no longer an abstraction. Any government of Russia, Soviet or non-Soviet, must seek to curb Germany's military power. Twice in the course of one generation Russia was almost conquered by Germany; both times she was saved by western intervention. The first time the west appeared as the enemy of Russia's

enemy; the second time as Russia's ally. Moreover, a peace loving Russia will be more consistent and also more sincere in its demands for curbing a new German rearmament. An aggressive Soviet government might speculate on gaining from an alliance with a rearmed Germany, as the Kremlin in fact speculated during its flirtation with the pre-Hitler *Reichswehr*, and in its agreements with Hitler in 1939-40; but a government of Russia that truly wants peace will cherish no hopes from a rearmed Germany.

The Soviet demand that German rearmament be curbed and effectively supervised is therefore justified and understandable from every standpoint. The difficulty lies elsewhere. For one thing, Russia still has not stated clearly what she is prepared to concede in exchange for curbs on German rearmament (in other words, how she will prove her pacific intentions); a number of demands made by the Kremlin may also be assumed to be mere dialectical stage setting for serious negotiations.

A balancing of the strength of the east and the west in Europe can be obtained in two ways: either by encouraging the rearmament of West Germany to its maximum or by reducing the military strength of the Soviet Union and its satellites. The cold war followed the first path. The new attitude of Moscow opens a way for the alternate course. But what is Moscow prepared to contribute to the realization of this course? At this moment some beginnings are apparent. The Soviet forces withdrew from Austria as a result of the Austrian peace treaty. The Soviet Union announced a reduction of its army by more than half a million men. Czechoslovakia, too, announced a reduction of its forces. These are symbolic beginnings. A real change in Soviet policy in Europe will express itself in three ways: (a) The recall of all Russian troops now stationed abroad back into the Soviet Union, (b) The reduction of the combined military

strength of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary to the size of the combined forces of Germany and Austria, (c) Giving the People's Democracies an opportunity to elect freely their own governments while providing adequate guarantees that they would not be hostile toward Russia. The case of Finland proves the feasibility of such a plan. It also seems likely that Russia would not be averse to recalling its troops home. It is the last two items that will be the chief bone of contention in top level negotiations. The west on its part must realize that negotiations will be pointless unless it is prepared to pay Moscow's legitimate asking price: a) Limiting German rearmament to the minimum essential to Germany's existence as a sovereign state (less than provided for in the agreements of 1955), and b) An effective system of supervising German armament (unlike the system employed during the Weimar period which completely broke down, in part as a result of Russia's policies).

Still another difficulty is bound to arise. The Kremlin representatives now stress two demands: that a united Germany should remain outside regional defense pacts (i. e. that the Bonn government should leave NATO), and that the U. S. withdraw its forces from Europe. It is clear that Russia does not want a powerful Germany within a defense arrangement to which Russia is not a party. But should assurances be given that Germany will remain militarily weak, and should NATO give adequate guarantees of its defensive character, NATO's supervision over German armaments would be an additional assurance for Russia.

This brings us to the Soviet demand regarding the withdrawal of the American forces from Europe. It is clear that should Russia fulfill the foregoing three conditions and appreciably reduce her army, America would have no need to maintain a permanent force in Europe. But what of British and French forces? Does not

the cause of peace, effective supervision over Germany and the interests of Russia herself require their prolonged presence in Germany? It is possible that an agreement between East and West will lead to the relative strengthening of France and Britain on the international scene. But is not this in the interest of world peace?

Settlement of the European problem is conditional on Russia's withdrawal from Central Europe and the Balkans, and on absolute military curbs on a reunited Germany. Washington understands the first point well, but it is doubtful whether it comprehends the second condition equally well—yet the two are closely interrelated. In addition to these two crucial issues the great problem of international economic relations will soon come to the fore. This can be defined briefly as an appreciable grant of American and western credit to Russia in exchange for the removal of the iron curtain and all other obstacles in the way of mutual contacts between Russia and the rest of the world. A government of Russia that guarantees its peoples peace and economic prosperity will no longer need an iron curtain. It will be more popular at home than any other Soviet government during the thirty-eight years of the existence of the Soviet regime. Granting western credit to Russia will automatically lead to a great flow of goods and people in both directions. Mutual understanding will increase, and the fears of the past will vanish. Russia and America lived at peace with each other for one hundred and thirty years. There is no reason why these relations should not be reestablished once the problem of Europe is solved. Both America and Russia will be able to contribute their full measure to the leadership of the world if the continent of Europe becomes a great independent force bringing them together instead of separating them.

North Africa is today one of the most threatening danger zones on earth. The outcome of the savage struggle being waged here will determine events far and wide. As has happened many times before, the large Jewish community in North Africa is caught between the anvil of Moslem nationalism and the hammer of French colonialism and is in danger of being crushed between them. In this article MAURICE CARR, noted correspondent and staff member of the *London Jewish Chronicle*, gives a vivid account of the social conditions and cultural forces underlying the conflict.

## The North African Drama

By MAURICE CARR

**F**rench North Africa is a house divided. Here live 25,000,000 Moslems, 2,000,000 Christian settlers and 500,000 Jews. At best there is little love between these groups. When the suppressed hatred erupts, as it has done recently, there is savage violence.

In the North African drama of loveless coexistence, the Moslem nationalist says: "This house is rightfully mine. I'll throw out the infidel whose father dispossessed my father, and I will be my own master again."

The European colonist says: "When I first came here, I found a pestilent land where people died like flies in the autumn. I have made this a fit place to live in. Thanks to me, the indigenous population has doubled since the turn of the century. It is my mission to rule."

The Jew says—nothing, if he can help it, or as little as possible, when urged to take sides. His status is that of a despised lodger, even though his ancestors were here long before the arrival of either Islam or Christendom. He dare not be a party to the conflict between the old and the new rulers, though his whole way of life—even life itself—depends upon the outcome.

The struggle in North Africa is of universal interest. Behind the Moslems stands the Arab League, craving control over the whole of North Africa, and hegemony over unbroken territory from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. Behind the European colonists stands France, the near-great Power which, if evicted from North Africa, would be so weakened as to lose all hope of Western European leadership, to the advantage of Germany. As for the Jews, they look for support and rescue to the reborn State of Israel and to the rest of world Jewry.

Until a decade ago, the Jews of North Africa were something of a "lost tribe," and were discovered only after the Germans had exterminated six million Jews.

Today, whether he likes it or not, every Israeli, and every Jew in New York, Paris or London, is more or less directly concerned with what happens in Casablanca, Tunis, Algiers, Marrakesh or some formerly unheard-of Sahara desert oasis. Events in North Africa intimately involve the future of Israel and—through Israel—of world Jewry.

For one thing, North Africa is at present the sole major source of *aliyah*, because so many Jews there are at once



unhappy and free to leave. Obviously it will make an immense difference to Israel whether the North African Jews come in an orderly stream, or descend in a chaotic torrent of tens or hundreds of thousands, with or without belongings, or should the Moslem nationalists put their foot down—not at all.

Secondly, so long as the fate of French North Africa hangs in the balance, the Arab States may be expected to defer their final decision on peace or war with the Jewish State, preferring to maintain their present wait-and-see belligerency. The Arab League cherishes the hope of gaining mastery over the whole of North Africa as a prelude to the dreamed-of annihilation of Israel in a "second round." It is doubtful whether all the strength and prestige of American diplomacy can persuade the Arabs to settle with Israel while the destiny of North Africa remains undecided.

Arab diplomacy and conspiracy accord priority to French North Africa, that vast land-mass with a population more than half that of all the Arab League states combined. Should the Arab League spread its control westward to the Strait of Gibraltar, the Arabs will have scored their most resounding victory since the Moorish invasion of Spain more than a thousand years ago. Cairo and Damascus, Beirut and Baghdad feel that then they would be able to summon up the force to try and rub the Israeli speck out of the Islamic eye.

**T**he nationalist movement in North Africa has attained such proportions, that its ultimate triumph is as certain as anything can be in human affairs. The question which remains unanswered—and it is paramount—is what sort of nationalism will emerge uppermost?

There are, broadly speaking, two basically different trends in nationalism. The first kind—preponderant in Morocco, Algeria and in most of the Arab world—

is incarnated in the Moslem who does not mind if his house is decrepit, his family famished, diseased, exploited, so long as he can expel the "meddling unbelievers" and be his own unchallenged master. He hankers after the decadent medievalism in which Islam lived for centuries and which was disturbed by European intruders. In his political program, this nationalist does not even pay lip-service to social or economic goals. Corruption, oppression, poverty, ignorance, sickness, are things he takes for granted with oriental fatalism. All he revolts against is the stranger in his midst. It does not worry him that the *jellah* in independent Egypt is much worse off than the *jellah* in French-ruled North Africa. He is quite happy about the newly-established kingdom of Libya, where sovereignty has become synonymous with stopped-up sewers, broken-down telephone lines, generally disrupted public services and chaos all over; synonymous also, of course, with Arab League membership and with persecution and forcible detention of what remains of the Jewish minority.

If this type of nationalist extremist seizes power in North Africa then woe betide the Jews and the Christians there; pity, also, the ordinary Moslems. Yet this fanatic, whose supreme contempt for human rights is a threat to domestic and external peace, is now in an exceptionally strong position. He has allies everywhere: among the ignorant Moslem multitude, among Western liberals who regard him as an idealist, or at worst a "noble savage," among communist rabble rousers, and, last but not least, among the diehard European settlers and reactionary French politicians in Paris, who fancy themselves to be his worst enemies, but who are really his best friends because by their refusal to compromise they promote the vicious circle of terrorism and counter-terrorism, despair and madness, on which the retrogressive nationalist thrives.



Somewhat timidly opposed to this dangerous nationalist, is the other, more liberal type—to be found largely in Tunisia—who also desires to become master in his own house, but is at the same time anxious to transform it into a decent dwelling. Ruefully aware that his still primitive people lack the skills and the resources to build swiftly a modern, efficient, democratic state, he is ready to enter—at least temporarily—into a working partnership with France, that same colonial France in whose schools and universities he learned about Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Believing in progress, in democracy, technology, humanism, in tolerance toward all men regardless of religion or race, this forward-minded nationalist sees himself as the precursor—as well he may be—of an Islamic renaissance both material and spiritual. His staunchest allies are the liberals of France, who realize that half a loaf is better than no loaf at all, that France is doomed to lose North Africa altogether unless she grants it home rule first and, later, Dominion status within a French Commonwealth.

Moderate nationalism in North Africa is a tender plant, which the local extremists, the Cairo agents, and the Arab League are determined to uproot. It can grow and bear fruit if France helps it with a firm but friendly hand. It will surely be destroyed if France is forced to quit. It will as surely wither if the French protective hand is firm but not friendly.

Liberal nationalism is most conspicuous, and its frailty is most apparent, in Tunisia, which has just won home rule. There the governing Neo-Destour party has a program for the emancipation of the common man, which it can fulfill only with enlightened French help. If the French were to abandon Tunisia tomorrow, then the day after tomorrow the Neo-Destour would be obliged either to jettison its liberalism or go under in a raging sea of hostility from the Moslem

traditionalists, from the Old Destourians, the bigots of the Great Mosque, the Moslem Brethren and the Arab League emissaries. Rather than drown in a heroic but foredoomed effort without outside aid, the Neo-Destour leaders would probably resign themselves to keep swimming in the stagnant past.

Under the aegis of France, however, the Neo-Destour hopes to achieve great things. In Tunis, Dr. Zaddok Mokkadem, theoretician of the Neo-Destour political bureau and Minister of Justice, told me with evident sincerity at the end of a long conversation: "Believe me, we will set up a thoroughly modern, humane state, which will serve as a prototype, a beacon in Islam."

The very thought of such a beacon causes the Arab League chieftains to blink in dismay, and they are openly critical of Tunisia's new status of internal autonomy within the French orbit which, for all they know, may lead to the creation of the first truly democratic state in the Arab world. The example set by such a state would certainly hasten the collapse of the ruling reactionary cliques in the Arab League countries. They will do all they can to prevent a peaceful advance towards prosperity and justice in Tunisia. They intend to sabotage, too, any settlement in Morocco and Algeria. Throughout North Africa they will continue to stoke the fires of religious, racial and social animosity.

The result of the conflict between progressive and retrogressive nationalists will inevitably have major repercussions on Israel. Israel itself is anathema to its neighbors not so much because of the absurdly small space it occupies within the vast Arab domain, but because its social structure and political regime may put ideas into the heads of the exploited Arab masses and undermine the authority of the present rulers.

It should not be thought, however, that the Neo-Destour is already favorably in-

clined toward Israel or Zionism. When I recently ventured to raise the subject with the head of the Neo-Destour, Habib Bourguiba, he flew into a rage, applying to the Jews "who drove the Arabs out of Palestine" the worst epithet in his vocabulary—"colonialists." "You Jews have no more moral claim to Palestine," he thundered, "than we Arabs have to Spain, which we once occupied."

But in the long run realities are stronger than emotions. Significantly, a Neo-Destour trade unionist recently asked for a visa to Israel, so that he might study the activities of the Histadrut. Another Neo-Destour man wanted to go to see the kibbutzim. In Tunisia itself, the Neo-Destour will have to lean heavily on trained Jewish personnel if practical accomplishments are to be made.

Will the developments in North Africa lead to a calamitous Judeo-Arab clash or to a new Judeo-Arab Golden Age? Normally, history does not work in pure white or unrelieved black—although there have been notable exceptions to this rule, especially in the case of the Jews—but uses grays of various shades. For good or ill, however, the impact of the North African drama upon the half-million Jews in the area, upon the Jewish State and upon Jews generally, is likely to be very powerful. To meet it squarely, intelligent anticipation will be needed; and that presupposes not only vigilance, but familiarity with the North African scene.

**T**o the Arabs, French North Africa is known as the *Moghreb*—land of the setting sun, for it runs to the westernmost edge of the Islamic world. They also call it the Island of *Moghreb*, for it is wholly surrounded on one side by the waters of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and, on the other, by the barely navigable sands of the Sahara and Libyan deserts.

Too large to be governed by a single Arab ruler, this "island" was for centuries split into three realms, which are

today still politically distinct territories—Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia. The similarities between the three component parts are greater than the differences.

From one end of the *Mohgreb* to the other, the landscape consists of similar fertile lowlands, forbidding mountains, immense wildernesses and small oases. Everywhere one encounters the same fantastic clash of centuries: the spick-and-span new gas stations and the prehistoric nomad agglomerations of brush huts, which are lifted off the ground by an invisible occupant within, and carried away to the next pasturage, so that often entire villages may be seen on the move, as if by magic; the ultra-modern western city, and, in the shadow of the skyscrapers, the medieval *medina*—Moslem quarters, usually with a wretched Jewish ghetto attached.

The social pattern, too, is everywhere repeated. Side by side with the veiled Moslem woman there is the briefly attired European woman. The monstrously fat-bellied pasha in the bazaar walks alongside the emaciated, legless cripple propelling himself with hands that are "shod" in bits of wood tied on with string. The streamlined automobile weaves its way among camels. The minarets and church steeples rear up challengingly into the blue skies, and the synagogues cower on the ground. Gaudy opulence, screaming poverty, varied smells, the savage bustle of the cities, the oppressive silence of the *bliad*—the countryside. And through it all, like an extra thread in a carpet already too complex, winds the Jew, now in European clothes, now in native garb, but never quite a European nor quite a native.

From east to west, there is a curious gradation in the scale of human values. The accepted symbol of the Tunisian character is a woman. Tunisia is gentle, *la douce Tunisie*. For the Algerian, the symbol is a man, harsh, matter-of-fact. The Moroccan is a warrior. The

educated Tunisian Moslem wears his *djellabah* (outer cloak) dashingly, like a Roman toga. The Algerian *sheikh* carries his indifferently. The Moorish chieftain is wrapped in his as if it were a nomad's tent.

From east to west, the racial stock of the Moghreb changes perceptibly. It is common and convenient, though ethnographically inaccurate, to refer to all the Moslems as Arabs, to all the Europeans as French, and to all the Jews as—Jews. Actually, the predominant strain among the Mohammedans is autochthonous Berber, with an admixture of various conquerors: Phoenicians of Tyre and Carthage, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, modified with the blood of slaves, black and white, brought in by Barbary pirates across the desert and the sea. In Tunisia, the mixture is most varied, and it thins out westward until in Morocco the racial composition is in many areas almost unadulterated Berber.

The Europeans are only in small part French. Of diverse origins — largely Spanish, Italian, Corsican and Maltese Greek—they form a veritable foreign legion of mercantile adventurers. Often penniless and desperate when they descended upon the Moghreb eldorado, they quickly amassed wealth and power and, in a generation or two, pauper families became *grands seigneurs*.

As for the Jews, it is estimated that at least half of them are the descendants of Berbers who embraced Judaism long ago. In many isolated villages of the Atlas Mountains there are Jewish communities today that are unmistakably of pure Berber stock; yet they willingly suffer any torment and are ready to die, if need be, for their Jewishness. Elsewhere, in Fez for instance, there are whole colonies of aristocratic Mohammedans who know themselves to be the descendants of Spanish Jews forcibly converted to Islam. Some still bear the name of Cohen. All are strikingly Jewish in appearance. Yet

they are ardent Arab nationalists, and markedly anti-Jewish into the bargain.

It is believed that the first large-scale settlement of Palestinian Jews occurred in North Africa in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, when not all the exiles from Judea took the road to Babylon. Some apparently sought refuge in Africa. Legend maintains that the ancient synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba—incidentally, the whole Jewish community there is now moving to Israel—incorporates in its foundations a stone brought along from the ruined first Temple of Solomon. Be that as it may, there is abundant archaeological and other evidence that Jews have lived in the Moghreb continuously and in large numbers for more than two millennia. They seem to have prospered especially under the rule of Carthage, whose Punic language was closely akin to Hebrew.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, in 70 C. E., there was another large Jewish influx into North Africa. The second century revolt of Bar Kochba in Palestine was accompanied by a desperate uprising of Jewish zealots in Cyrenaica, whose survivors finally fled into the interior of Africa, only to re-emerge decades later in the Moghreb by way of the Sahara, where they created oases by digging networks of irrigation tunnels, the remains of which are among the wonders of the Dark Ages. In their wanderings these insurgents, it seems, lost none of their zeal, for they brought many Berber tribes into the Mosaic fold.

When the Arab hosts rode into the Moghreb at the turn of the eighth century, introducing the new religion of Mohammed with the edge of their swords, they were met and routed at first by a Jewish army led by Kahena, prophetess and queen of the Aures mountains. Some years later, however, Kahena was defeated in a second battle. Her head was cut off and despatched as a trophy to

Damascus, for she had refused to surrender. But before dying she enjoined her sons to save their lives by going over to Islam. This they did, and served as generals under the commander Tarik Ibn Ziad who led the Moorish invasion of Spain in 711 C. E.

While the Judeo-Arab civilization flourished in Spain—with interludes of terror—the Jewish communities in North Africa were the victims of barbaric intolerance with peaceful intervals. It was in 12th century Morocco that the few Jews whose lives had been spared though they would not abjure the faith of their forefathers were first segregated in ghettos and made to wear a special costume designed to arouse contempt.

Whatever indignities and cruelties the Jews may have known in capricious Islam, these were as nothing compared with the ordeal of deliberate annihilation which they underwent in coldly calculating Christendom. From Inquisitorial Spain, tens of thousands of Jews streamed into the Moghreb, risking the hazards of medieval travel. The light which the refugees, Jewish and Moslem alike, brought with them from Spain, soon faded. The Moghreb sank into an ever deeper torpor.

The Jews stagnated in their ghettos—known as *mellahs* in Morocco and as *haras* in Algeria and Tunisia. The word *mellah* means salt, and was applied to the ghetto because among the many menial tasks imposed upon the Jews, was that of salting the severed heads which the Moslem overlords brought back from their wars to make a proud display. The Jew in the Moghreb was not hated or feared to a morbid degree approaching respect, as was the case in Europe; he was simply despised as a miserable unbeliever who deserved to be butchered and robbed periodically, but who was yet suffered to perpetuate his inferior species, for like the beast of burden, he was of service to the Moslem. All the things that

the Mohammedan was too proud or too languid to do, were left to the Jew, who accordingly became the scavenger, cobbler, tailor, peddler, and frequently also the merchant prince, the financial counselor, or minister of State. Since the Moslem potentates preferred loot to trade, and had too great a contempt for foreigners to care for personal relations with them, be they kings or emperors, the Jew became the trader and even the diplomat.

The *mellah* or *hara*, enclosed within thick walls whose heavy gates were locked at night, adjoined the fortified *medina*, to which it paid heavy taxes for protection against marauders, and by which it was plundered and massacred, whenever the Moslem mob got out of control. When the Jew left the *mellah*, clad in his black garments, he was allowed to ride an ass, but not a horse; he was not permitted to ride through the *medina*, or even to walk through it with his shoes on; and not even barefoot could he go near a Moslem sanctuary. Never must he raise his voice, let alone his hand, in self-defense when derided or beaten by Moslem man or child. Even when he brought a rich gift to his Moslem master on appointed feast-days, he was rewarded with a slap on the nape of the neck, to demonstrate that even on the friendliest of missions the Jew was still a despicable creature. When a Jew was mentioned by a Moslem in polite conversation, the apologetic phrase, "pardon the obscenity," was added. Even when dead, the Jew was humiliated: his corpse had to be taken to the cemetery at a run and put into a grave without a proper headstone.

Within the *mellah* or *hara*, however, the Jew was left to live his own life more or less as he saw fit. Though he was not authorized to erect recognizable synagogues, but had to install his house of worship in an ordinary dwelling, he was yet free to pray to God in his own way.



The ghetto enjoyed internal autonomy. The rabbi dispensed religious as well as temporal law, and sent offenders to prison. Government in the ghetto was by a junta of notables who collected the taxes on *kashrut*, levied other imposts, and distributed the charity. Talmud and Cabala were assiduously memorized. Superstitions of all kinds became inextricably intertwined with religious beliefs. Disease and pogroms ravaged the community, which defended itself with frenzied procreation. Child-marriages were the rule, and still are in the remote parts of the Moghreb. The struggle for bare survival was stubbornly waged down the centuries—until the French came.

France established her first North African bridgehead in Algeria in 1830. What was first intended as a punitive expedition became a permanent occupation. For many years the French hesitated to subdue the widespread anarchy, but when they brought themselves to it, they resolved not only to colonize Algeria, but to transform it into an integral part of the mother country. The Algerians were to be wholly assimilated. An experimental beginning was made with the Jews, who were expected to be easier to absorb than the Moslems. In 1865, Napoleon III promulgated a law which conferred French citizenship on all Algerian Jews who applied for it. Five years later, when Benjamin Cremieux was Minister of the Interior, a decree was issued conferring French citizenship on the entire Algerian Jewish community.

This measure of collective naturalization did not arouse the jealousy of the Moslems, who were also offered French citizenship for the asking; but it infuriated the European settlers, who would not admit Jewish equality, and they launched a bitter anti-Semitic campaign which only died down after the Second World War, when the upsurge of Arab nationalism gave the colonists something

else to think about.

Under Vichy, the Algerian Jews were deprived of French citizenship, but were spared deportation to the European death camps, thanks to the Allied landings in North Africa. Today, enjoying once more full rights as French citizens, most Jews of Algeria would like nothing better than to be inconspicuous; in this they resemble their co-religionists of metropolitan France. The poor, the workers, the petty traders, the unemployed and the unemployables whose chief source of income is the monthly dole paid by the French government to heads of large families, still display the bodily and spiritual scars of ghetto-life. But the Jewish middle class, the aristocrats of the purse and the intellectual *élite* are scarcely distinguishable from the Frenchmen. Algerian Jews look to Paris as the city of their dreams. But since emancipation is comparatively recent, Judaism in Algeria is still virile enough to be an export article to France. It is no accident that the new Chief Rabbi of Paris, Meyer Jais, is Algerian-born. A number of Jews have been killed, and some Jewish property has been destroyed in the recent guerilla warfare waged by Arab nationalists in Algeria. The 40,000 Jews who live scattered in vulnerable small towns and villages now tend to drift to the relative safety of the large cities.

Tunisia became a French Protectorate in 1881. As a result of its experiences in Algeria, the French government was reluctant to grant French citizenship to the Jews, collectively or otherwise. But in order to maintain the numerical balance between the French and the Irredentist Italians resident in Tunisia, France naturalized about 20,000 Tunisian Jews individually between 1923 and 1933.

The Tunisians, Jew and Moslem alike, are intellectually more active and culturally closer to the 20th century than

are the other Moghreb peoples. Of the 105,000 Jews in the country, 70,000 are concentrated in the city of Tunis, where they predominate in business and in the liberal professions. The *hara* is still thickly populated with Jewish paupers; but all the children go to some school and are spared the ravages of starvation and of the worst effects of endemic diseases by the Jewish communal organizations subsidized by the American "Joint."

What will happen now that the Tunisians are about to govern themselves? The Jews await the future with mixed feelings. *Destour* means Constitution; the Tunisians were the first Moslems to formulate a constitutional, democratic policy linked with nationalist aspirations. The Neo-Destour party has an irreproachable record toward the Jews. When the Germans occupied Tunisia in 1942, long enough to inflict ugly wounds on the Jewish community, but not to complete the crematorium which they had started to build, Neo-Destour emissaries went from mosque to mosque urging the Arabs to ignore German propaganda and to leave the Jews in peace. However, it is impossible to foretell whether the Neo-Destour will be able to maintain itself against the Moslem extremists, who are rabidly anti-Jewish and who have of late persistently baited and intimidated the *hara*. The Neo-Destour may deem it necessary to proclaim its anti-Zionism, which ultimately cannot be separated from anti-Jewishness, especially in Tunisia, where most Jews are Zionists. (In the communal elections which took place in Tunis last spring, the Zionist element, led by Maitre Charles Haddad, won an overwhelming majority.) There is also the possibility—not to say the likelihood—that the Jewish economic position may be rendered untenable by the general attitude of the Arabs, even if not by government fiat.

The Tunisian Jews are now in suspense, equally ready to stay in their

present domicile if the new Tunisia will encourage it, or, if need be, to emigrate. Today the Tunisian Jew's most treasured possession is an identity card, issued by authority of the Franco-Tunisian conventions, which authorizes the holder to take himself, his family and his belongings out of the country whenever he pleases within the next 10 years.

**I**t was as late as the age of the motor car, the movie, and the airplane that the French stormed into Morocco where time had been standing still. The bleak hinterland was not "pacified" until 1924. As a reaction to the impossible attempt to assimilate Algeria, the French resorted to another extreme in Morocco: they tried to introduce patches of 20th century civilization without disturbing the medieval Moorish way of life. Shining new cities sprang up next to, but without at first intruding upon, the old *medinas* and *mellahs*. The Sultan was allowed to keep his harem and lions' den; the Koranic judge, his bribes; the Moorish beggar, his alms dish; and the Jew, his status as a *dhimmi*, a barely tolerated infidel who in an Islamic theocracy could not expect to be treated on an equal footing with Moslems. This is still the legal condition of the Moroccan Jew today.

Nonetheless, the Jew had cause to rejoice. Under the French Protectorate, he was free to walk through the *medina* with shoes on, free to ride in an automobile if he could afford it, free to quit the foul *mellah*, free to lift his head, though not too high, and free to believe that even full freedom would be his.

A small minority of Jews succeeded in hoisting themselves out of the *mellah*, and rapidly attained a degree of human dignity exceeding their most sanguine dreams. But those who remained within the crumbling *mellah* walls, sank to new depths. In the process of stamping out the plague in order to safeguard themselves, the French unwittingly helped the

native population to multiply enormously.

The *mellahs* became the most abominable slums on earth as they grew ever more congested. The primitive artisan, forced into competition with modern occidental techniques, lost whatever little self-respect he previously had. Abandoned by the wealthy notables who had gone over to the European quarters, the *mellah* community fell into chaos. Religion broke down. The only helping hand from the outside was extended by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, which founded more schools, but never enough to take in all the children.

Much has been said of the *mellah*, the heart of the Moroccan Jewish problem. What, exactly, is it like? Here, briefly, is a description of the biggest and hence worst of the *mellahs*, the one in Casablanca, on a day when commerce is not paralyzed at the order of Moslem nationalists, and when relative peace prevails.

The ancient ghetto in the new Casablanca is like a running sore on a fair face. By way of a bandage a 700-foot-long billboard hides the *mellah* where it abuts on Place de France, the great bustling square at the center of the city.

At present there are some 85,000 Jews in Casablanca—35,000 in the new city and 50,000 in the *mellah*. Recently additional thousands of Jews have been streaming here from remote villages in the Atlas mountains and the Sahara desert. Some families have taken refuge in veritable holes in the ground on the outer fringe of the *mellah*; others have gone to reside in niches in the walls inside the *mellah*.

Where the *mellah* begins, all human privacy ends. Inextricably tangled masses of people swarm through the narrow, airless alleys, which branch off at odd angles. Nearly everybody moves languidly, laboriously. So many people, young and old, are sick—manifestly sick, with

glazed eyes, palsied limbs, dirty heads, graveyard coughs, swollen bellies, lunatic expressions. But so powerful is the crowd-effect that there is a general impression of liveliness, of strength, even at times of gaiety. Children carry on their heads boards with flat, circular loaves to go into the baker's oven. Watersellers, their precious liquid dripping from shaggy goatskin containers slung over half-naked backs, ring their bells. A woman washes away a bright pool of blood from a fight between father and son. Beggars and idlers squat against the walls. Mothers nurse babies at their breasts. Children kneel in a circle over dice. Pails and pitchers are being filled at a street pump. Shopkeepers crowd about counters in holes in the wall. No space is wasted: the man on the top counter is a butcher, and the one underneath a greengrocer. In their tortured postures they look like yogis framed in the smallest of frames.

The *mellah* is full of Jews from different epochs, recognizable by their diverse costumes. Here comes a blind, bearded man in the still widely-worn, old-fashioned *djellabah* coat, roughly sewn together from blanket material to form a sort of portable one-man tent, *babouche* leather slippers open round the heel and and rising to a point at the toe; a little black fez perched at the back of the head imparting an idiotic elongation to the skull. He is led by his bored four-year-old daughter, who is barefoot and clad in a torn sack that is slipping off her shoulders. A couple of bareheaded young men stroll by in tight American jeans and loud sweaters, one affectionately clasping the little finger of the other.

Everywhere are Jews who have discarded the black fez for a black beret, which yet somehow contrives to look like a fez; often they wear European jackets over knee-length, skirt-like Oriental pantaloon, and unlaced shoes over bare feet coated with dirt. Some sport a single earring. There are fat women in flower-

ed, ankle-length dresses, with colorful fringed shawls wrapped deftly round their heads. There are little children, two and three years of age, in similar gowns. There are young women, office and shop workers, in the latest Parisian style frocks, amply *décolleté*. There are little girls who look indistinguishable from boys, for their diseased scalps have been shaven, and the tatters they wear are nondescript. There are young women of thirteen and fourteen married to men of fifty and sixty. In a few years' time they will become, like so many other *mellah* women, widows with broods of famished children. And there goes a magnificently elegant personage, a blind singer-poet-composer, the *mellah's* sole artist, who performs at rich Jewish weddings in Casablanca and who is happily married to two wives.

Crowded though the alleys may be, they are spacious when compared with the indoor scenes. In an ordinary room serving as synagogue and *cheder*, a mob of children cover the benches like a swarm of flies. At the slightest flutter of the pupils, from dawn to sundown, the master furiously swipes at them with his leather thong. His task is to teach them *yeshivah*—how to sit motionless. In the better dwellings there is a central courtyard or chamber, surrounded by a dozen or more cubby-holes, each of which is occupied by an entire family, usually consisting of several generations. The cooking over charcoal heaters, the washing with water brought from a distant pump, the talking, the quarreling, the jesting, the cursing, everything, indeed, except the sleeping is done in this communal patio.

Then there are the thousands of hovels without any patio, reached by a labyrinth of passages and crazy stairs, so narrow that if two people want to get by each other they have to press hard against the walls. Here in windowless, stinking rooms lie the dying of all ages, from scabby,

naked infants to panting adolescents and groaning grandparents.

Many homes are quite devoid of furniture. Some have a rickety bed, a wardrobe; others even a radio. All have magic charms hanging on the leprous walls, prints of Moses the Lawgiver and other saints, and often photographs of smart young men in military uniform, sons in the army in Israel.

When night comes to the Casablanca *mellah*, the evil promiscuity attains its paroxysm. The uneasy stillness is constantly broken by people who scream in their sleep. The first rays of the sun touch the heap of decrepit walls, and at once the *mellah* bestirs itself again to its daily waking nightmare.

After World War II, Moroccan Jews at last gained the attention of international Jewish welfare organizations. The American Joint Distribution Committee, ORT, OSE, even the Lubavitcher Chassidim, opened aid centers in Casablanca.

Then came the rise of Israel and aroused a frenzy of messianic exaltation. Moroccan Jews are simple-minded folk, who see the remote past lingering on in the present. To them, it was but yesterday that the Temple was destroyed; no later than tomorrow it will be rebuilt in all its glory. When they were forbidden by the Protectorate authorities to contribute to Israeli funds, they did so stealthily carrying sackfuls of small, sacrificially-donated coins to the clandestine Zionist in the synagogue. In poverty-stricken Morocco, more modern Hebrew books are sold than can be given away in all of Europe and America.

When Israel was proclaimed, hundreds of young Moroccan Jews therefore stole away to take up arms and lay down their lives for Israel in the war of independence against the Arabs, and after the great victory was won, thousands of families sold such homes as they possessed



and began an exodus to Israel. However, disenchantment awaited the Moroccan Jews in the Promised Land. They dreamed of sitting under palm trees in the Holy City, drinking mint tea and *mahia*, home-made fig brandy, and singing ecstatic songs, now that the Millennium was at hand. No one had forewarned them that in Israel they would have to water the soil with the sweat of their brow. They were hurt to hear themselves upbraided as lazy good-for-nothings. It maddened them to find themselves suffering from a sense of inferiority in their own country. They fancied they were the victims of discrimination in Israel. Some 40,000 Moroccan Jews stayed in Israel, but several hundred disgruntled ones returned to the *mellah* where they spread atrocity stories which brought the *aliyah* to a halt.

When the Arab nationalist terrorism, though primarily directed against the French, brought increased economic distress and anxiety to the *mellah*, there was a renewed rush for *aliyah*. Today, at least half of Morocco's 270,000 Jews are prepared to go to Israel, if given the chance.

Should the already active volcano of community hatreds in Morocco erupt in full force, it will destroy the *mellahs* in

the first flow of its lava.

Yet there is a chance that reason may prevail. The leaders of the Council of Moroccan Jewish Communities would like to hope—even after the pogroms at Oued Zem, Mazagan, Ouezzane, Safi and elsewhere, on August 20—that a peaceful Franco-Moroccan settlement on the Tunisian model will be reached and that the tyrannical Moroccan theocracy will give way to a constitutional monarchy.

One thing may safely be taken for granted. The whole of the Moghreb will eventually go the way Morocco goes. French North Africa is like a stage divided into three sets, where three inter-related scenes of a single drama are enacted simultaneously. The drama is now approaching its climax. There cannot be a happy finale in Tunisia or Algeria if there is tragedy in Morocco. Here, in the "Happy Empire," as Morocco is called, passions are fiercest, the still tribal society most difficult to handle, the problems most intricate. Should liberal Frenchmen and enlightened Moslems in Morocco come to a peaceful understanding, a signal victory will have been won for the entire region.

But Jewish leaders everywhere would be well advised while praying for the best, to prepare for the worst.

# Yaish in Heaven

By HAYIM HAZAZ

Again Yaish ascended to heaven and was met at once by his angel. "Peace be with you, angel of God," he greeted him effusively, as if he had not seen him in a dozen Yom Kippurs. "Peace to all the hosts of heaven. A thousand thousand greetings to all. Are you well? And what is new in heaven? Is everything in order? Ah, my dear friend, my child! I am so happy that I found you . . . Sit near me, my friend, and let us talk things over. You dwell in heaven, so tell me what goes on here? What do you hear from behind the scenes? And when will the redemption come?"

"I don't know," the angel said innocently, staring at Yaish.

"And what of the Throne of Glory? What is it like? And how is it decorated?"

"I don't know."

"And what is the order of the hosts before the wheels of the Throne of Glory? And what separates the hosts?"

"I don't know."

"My true friend," Yaish looked at the angel affectionately, "don't you want to tell me?"

"I do want to."

"Then tell me the order of the hosts, and what separates them."

"I don't know."

"Then I beg you to describe to me the warp and the woof from which the world is suspended. You will make me very happy if you tell me."

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Though a native of Eastern Europe, HAYIM HAZAZ, the noted Hebrew novelist, has closely studied the life and cultural patterns of the Yemenite Jews. "Yaish," his epic novel of Yemenite life, from which this excerpt is taken, portrays the inner life of an artist in a simple devout community where man's relationship with God is much more direct than in the West. But though he lived in remote Yemen and attempted to redeem the world by cabbalistic means, Yaish's experiment was not basically different from similar attempts in more rationalistic societies, and equally successful. The translation from the Hebrew is by SHLOMO KATZ.

Another Yemenite novel by HAZAZ, "Mori Said," will be published in English in this country in November, 1955, by Abelard Schuman.

"I don't know."

"I have seen many ignorant ones in my day on earth," Yaish said jokingly, "and I too am ignorant, but I never saw anyone as ignorant as you . . . Is this your wisdom, that you don't know? And how have you learned to say 'I don't know'?"

"I don't know."

"Yes, yes. Now perhaps you will say one time that you do know."

"Very well."

"Where is the Garden of Eden?"

"Over there," the angel pointed with his wing.

"Show it to me."

"There, over there."

"How many walls has the Garden of Eden?"

"I don't know."

"And how many firmaments over the skies has God created? And where are the mills that grind the manna for the saints?"

"I don't know."

"Are you mocking me? Is it possible that you don't know even this? . . . You angels waste your time in heaven—you aren't worth the feathers in your wings. If I were in your place, all the mysteries would be known to me and I would probe all the secrets of heaven. I would turn everything upside down, and change everything around, and know what is in every corner. Tell me, do you know where Gehinom is?"

"I have nothing to do with it."

"Perhaps you have heard tell, is it heated?"

"It is heated."

"And poor human beings are punished there?"

"What else?"

"They are suspended by their noses, and hands, and tongues, and feet, and eyes? Such punishment, and all on account of some nonsense? Ahhhh, poor people! If I were one of you I wouldn't rest till I found some way to undo the work of Satan and all his gang, may their names and memories be wiped out, enemies of God, destroyers of the world. I would proclaim fasts and prayers and I would purify myself in the river of fire, so that sin should not prevail. And if, God forbid, some sin should be committed, I would spread my wings and keep its report from reaching the Throne of Glory. I would uproot sin and destroy it from the face of the earth, so that there should remain neither sign nor memory of its existence among men, and even if a man should yearn to sin, he could not do so, and there should

remain no way for him to sin. That is how it should be. For, why was sin created? Why? For what purpose? What use does the world get out of it? It only causes destruction below on earth, and confusion and trouble above. Tell me, why did God create sin, and why did He make it sweet into the bargain? At least He should have made it bitter. Thus He created sweet fruit and bitter fruit. Peaches, for instance, are sweet, but nightshade is poison. Would any man dream of eating nightshade, or even of touching it? Or consider vegetables. There are ever so many good and sweet vegetables, and then there is mustard that is bitter. Is anyone eager to eat it? If His Blessed Name wanted man not to sin, He should have made sin bitter like those grasses that are bad to eat and bitter to the taste, and people would not run after it, but on the contrary, would flee from it. Pity poor man! Satan comes upon him to seduce him with the stench of his wisdom and the tokens of his falsehoods, and then he turns against him and betrays him and in the end man is condemned to Gehinom, for Satan is the evil urge and he is also the angel of death. Why is poor man to blame when he is misled and deceived, though he is innocent and knows naught? Why these deceptions and seductions? If he must be misled, let him be misled to do good and not evil, and then everyone will see how good people are, and what loyal children they are to the Holy One, Blessed be He. Why? Why is this so? Why must they deceive and put an obstacle before the pitiful one? Isn't it written, 'Thou shalt not place a stumbling block before a blind one'? And if I am deceived, must I in the end also be found guilty and condemned to Gehinom, God forbid? Or must I be the loser because Satan is stronger than I? Why is not the punishment visited upon him, but I must be held to blame? Why is all this? 'Have you murdered and also inherited?' No! This is not law and there is no-o-o-o justice in it! It is written, 'Truth, justice and peace shall you judge in your gates.' Matters must be repaired with a great remedy! We must do away with all these evils and change everything from beginning to end! Am I right? Tell me."

"You are right," the angel assented.

**M**y angel, servant of the Most High," Yaish led him on with soft words. "You want only what is good, don't you? You want only justice and fairness . . . Come, let us burn Gehinom, may its name and memory be wiped out! We won't leave a trace of it, not one stone upon another!"

"How will we do this?" the angel did not understand.

"Why do you wonder, faithful servant?" Yaish encouraged him. "You are my beloved angel . . . There is no time like the present, and no moment is better than now, when I love you two and three times more than you love



yourself. Help me and we will do a great work of justice and mercy for the good of people and the glory of God and the benefit of the world! When a good deed comes your way, you must not miss the opportunity. Where can we find fire here? Where? Where?"

"Over there, in the walls of the Garden of Eden."

"Come, let us run quickly and not pass up the chance to do a great good deed!"

"You want me to make a breach in the wall of the Garden of Eden? Isn't that forbidden?"

"Don't fear! Let it be on me and on my head! I promise you that God Himself will look on and rejoice . . . He who dwells in heaven will laugh. Come, hurry!"

The angel did not answer. He was confused and did not know what to do.

"Silence is the same as consent!" Yaish tried to drag him after himself, but the angel would not budge and stood fixed like a statue.

Yaish redoubled his efforts and assailed him with a torrent of words: "You still don't believe me! I see that you still don't love me in your heart. Or maybe you don't want to give the world respite from uncleanness and punishment, and you particularly want that Satan should go on ruling the world, and the bad ways of the enemies of God should not be ended? How can you sit there calmly and peacefully while pitiful people perish at the hands of Satan, may his name and memory be blotted out? Is this the love of Israel on which you angels pride yourselves? Isn't it love of Israel to feel all their needs and to suffer their pains and to grieve in their sorrow? Don't be stubborn at a time like this. Our sages have said, 'A man should always be soft as a reed and not hard as iron.' If this is true for man, how much more so for an angel. I beg you, don't be firm as a cedar. If you don't want to, you don't have to—I will do it myself, no matter what. But it is written, 'Two are better than one.' And I also want you to have the merit of a good deed. Why not? In any case, you understand it yourself, in your wisdom and because of your love for me and your endless loyalty to me. Therefore gird your strength and let us act; depend on God for He will help, as it is written, 'He who comes to purify shall be aided.' Hurry. Open your mouth and say, 'Amen! I am with you in all you desire'."

"Very good, O mortal," the angel consented. "I am with you in all that you desire."

"Bless you before heaven!" Yaish jumped up and kissed the angel on his head. "Blessed are you and blessed is your Creator! Come, let us go and not delay the matter."

But as they were about to start, Yaish halted in doubt. "My friend," he said. "What do you think? Wouldn't it be better that you should fly quickly by yourself, without hindrance, since you have wings, whereas I walk on foot?"

"Very well, I will do as you say."

"Go in peace. Hurry and do not delay, my brother. Seize whatever comes your way and return quickly to me. I will wait for you here."

The angel spread his wings and quickly disappeared from sight.

Yaish was left alone, deep in silence and sky. He raised his eyes and saw the stars twinkling and winking to each other and flying one to another.

He said to them: "Peace to you, hosts of heaven, peace to you, my dear ones, all the stars and planets. How I bless you, hosts of the upper regions. The might and power of the Name, Blessed be He, have brought me here to do a great work of perfecting heaven and earth. With God's help I will do great wonders such as you have not seen or imagined from the day that you were brought into being. Soon you will see with your own eyes something that you will much approve—how I will remove from innocent people the injustice and suffering with which evil Satan has yoked them, and all the great wrongs with which the heavens have wronged mankind. I am about to burn Gehinom and wipe out the uncleanness from God's heaven. Keep this matter a guarded secret, you stars of God, and aid me with your strength. Ah, how good it will be for the world, and how relieved mankind will be, and God also! The wicked will abandon their ways, and the unrighteous their schemes, and there will no longer be either Satan, or destroyer, or Gehinom, and only God, blessed be He, will be ruler over us. In place of sorrow and suffering there will be only joy and pleasure, grace and truth, and service of God with a whole heart, and love of people, and the earth will be full of knowledge of God like the waters that cover the sea. How wonderful and pleasant it will be! We will no longer be able to sin! We will not be *able* to, even if we should want to. No more Satan to mislead us. No evil urge. No idolatry. No adultery. No bloodshed. And you, too, O stars in your courses and planets in your orbits, and all the lights and signs of heaven which serve for each season, you too will improve your courses and your ways so that you only bring good to man, good luck and good chance and good dreams for children in their cribs, and it shall no longer be said of you, 'The stars have withdrawn their light'."

Thus Yaish spoke to the stars, and then he looked up and saw that the

heavens turned red as fire, and a great flame was approaching with a roar.

Yaish was breathless with terror. "What is that burning fire?" he whispered in amazement and fright. "Is there a conflagration in heaven? Or has the fire fallen out of the hands of the angel and caused a holocaust?"

In a few moments the angel descended from on high bearing a great wall of fire in his arms. "Here I am!" he cried.

"Ho, ho, ho! Is that you? You are welcome!" Yaish leaped backward, blinded by the great light. "Are you well in your body? And in your spirit? And in your wings? Don't come near me! No, no, no! Please! Don't endanger my life! May God forbid it, but a single spark from this great fire could burn my beard and my earlocks and roast my bowels."

"Get up! Come!" the angel encouraged Yaish. "What is the matter with you? This is only fire! Look, I hold it in my arms . . ."

"You are you, and I am I," Yaish reminded him. "You are an angel, a servant of the Most High, and you deal with fire, while I am only flesh and blood, and only my heart within me is on fire with great love and exaltation. Careful, my holy one. This is no joke. Please be careful and don't come too close to me. Let me cool myself a little and collect my thoughts. Step aside a bit. That's right. What a great fire you brought, a mountain of fire and a hill of flame, bless your head. No, no, no! Don't get close to me, do me a favor. Now let us go. Let us burn the wicked ones, those ill-begotten ones, so that they should no more do evil and destroy people. A little while longer and they will be like burnt straw. They will not escape the flame. Fly, dear one, hurry! Fly high and I will follow you, for I don't know the way. After you . . . After you . . ."

**T**hey started on their way, one flying and the other running after him, like a dog that follows its master, until they came to a broad and deep valley built over with many camps and courtyards, towers, and walls and fortresses. The angel descended and came to a stop, and Yaish, too, stopped, his teeth chattering with fear. At once two singed devils peeked over the wall and disappeared again, and soon a mixed mob of devils and demons and evil spirits crowded the walls climbing one over the other, screaming, screeching and shouting, swishing their tails and stamping their hooves and butting with their horns.

"Come to us," they screamed. "Come to us and let us get acquainted and have fun. Here, here, this way. Ho, you, stinker; you crawling worm! What did you come here for? Don't we always ride you as it is? Come and we'll peel your skin off, and we'll make a meal of your right thigh, and dessert of your left thigh. You brought your own fire, too? Thanks. Many thanks.

You too, come, you goose wing. Come and we'll make a pillow out of you."

The pandemonium increased momentarily. The devils clawed the wall, and flapped their wings, and babbled, and raised a great stench.

Yaish trembled like a leaf on its twig. He took cover behind the angel and whispered in terror: "Cover me with your wings! At them! At them! Don't be afraid! Pay no attention to them, even if they are devils! Set fire! Set fire! Throw the fire at them! Yuh-h-h! Stand before me and shield me!"

The angel leaped upward and tossed the wall of fire over the wall of Gehinom. At that instant all the devils disappeared; not a hoof or a horn was left. But soon they returned screaming louder than before, convulsed with gaiety.

"Ho-ho-ho!" they shouted placing their hands on their backs and knocking their knees together. "Ho-ho-ho! What a great fire you brought us! What a fine fire you gave us! It's like adding oil to a fire, or a wind to a flame! How it burns! How it scorches! Ho-ho-ho! No devil and no destroyer ever heated Gehinom as you did! Thanks! Many sincere thanks! Gehinom blesses you! Ho-ho-ho! Bring us more, more, more! Bring as much as you can to make the fire of Gehinom bigger, the better to burn those who are condemned to it. Ho-ho-ho!"

"Yuh-h-h! What have I done!" Yaish whispered horrified and seized his head. "They went to seek ears so they lost their horns," I didn't burn Gehinom; I only added fire to its fires and flame to its flames!"

"Whence did you come to trip us up," the angel said angrily. "Is this the great perfection you wanted to accomplish, and this the great deliverance in heaven and on earth that you wanted to bring? Woe is me, woe is me, that you misled me with your smooth talk more even than Satan the seducer!"

At that moment a man entered the synagogue. He turned one way and another and started to light the lamps for the midnight *Tikkun* prayers. As he was thus engaged he noticed Yaish lying on the floor, his head between his hands. He bent over him and shook him: "Get up! Get up and wash your hands! Soon the congregation will come for *Tikkun*."

Yaish opened his eyes and cried out: "Fire! Fire! Put out the fire!"

"What is the matter with you? Are you crazy?" the man scolded him pulling the covering from him. "Where do you think you are? Where? Get up, may your eye fall out! Put out the light? Why should I put out the light? Is this your father's house? You've made the synagogue a hostel for you to raise your stench in? You've already smelled up the place like Gehinom! Who knows how much stench you raised before the holy books, God preserve us."



Many social and political movements originating in Europe had to contend with the problem of American "exceptionalism." As the American Jewish community approaches maturity, American Zionism feels compelled to re-examine some of its tenets in the light of this "exceptionalism." This article—the first of a series of such discussions—analyzes some of the basic differences that distinguish American Jewry from other Jewish communities. BEN HALPERN is an editor of *Jewish Frontier*.

## America Is Different

By BEN HALPERN

**T**he Tercentenary celebrations of the American Jewish community, held this year, chanced to come at a time when two conditions combined to heighten our sense of our own peculiar destiny. We American Jews, after the destruction of the six million who were the main body of Jewry and the immediate source of our traditions, remain as the major part of all the Jews in the Diaspora. When we think of this, as we cannot help but think, we are filled both with awe and with guilt at the unmerited fortune through which we escaped, and we are both oppressed and uplifted by the leadership and new responsibilities we have inherited.

There is another source, too, of our sense of a special destiny. Since the Second World War, and especially since Eisenhower's election, all America has been overwhelmed with the feeling that this was our time of destiny, that the century was the American Century. To be sure, from the very beginnings of our history we Americans had felt we opened a new chapter, altering the whole character of everything that had gone before. With Wilson and F.D.R. we had seen ourselves propelled into the center and forefront of world events; yet we sometimes felt that these great leaders were actu-

ally doing no more, though in the distinctively American pragmatic fashion, than to force us to grow up to a point of social maturity the Old World had already attained before us. The end of the Second World War saw the Old World in full collapse, while we (having elected Eisenhower) looked back at what we had built, up to and under the New Deal, and sealed it as concluded, fully formed, a new American way of life suitable to be emulated by other peoples. In the period following the Eisenhower election, a mass of books, pamphlets and periodical articles appeared, all sounding in varying accents the same refrain: America is different!

The American Jewish Tercentenary celebrations came in upon the crest of this wave. Jews in America at their three hundred year mark have very strong reasons to underscore the theme that "America is different," and when they orchestrate this music, it is to a counterpoint of peculiarly Jewish *motifs*. America is different—because no Hitler calamity is going to happen here. America is different—because it has no long-established majority ethnic culture, but is evolving a composite culture of its own to which Jews, too, are privileged to make their characteristic contributions. America is

different—because it is almost all middle class, the class to which Jews most naturally belong, and there is no aristocracy to uphold old discriminations affecting, among others, the Jews. America is different—because it is all composed of immigrants, it is a country of men who, like the Jews, are new men. America is different—it is not Exile, and whatever may be the case with other Jewries, the open doors of the State of Israel do not beckon to us. With such a rich choice of harmonies, is it any wonder that the Tercentenary celebrations of the American Jews swelled to a powerful chorus, elaborately enunciating the single theme, “America is different!”

**I**t seems to me, however, that the crucial respect in which American Jewry is different has been missed altogether in the Tercentenary celebrations. That is not surprising, because if this difference were stressed it would make the whole occasion seem artificial and contrived. American Jewry is different from other Jewries. It is younger than any other significant Jewry—with the exception of the State of Israel. In terms of *real*, effective history we are far from being three hundred years old. There is good sense in Croce's contention that only the history of free, rational, creative effort is real history, and that the chronicle of events in which man is passive is a different kind of thing altogether. At any rate, if American Jewry has a truly distinct and individual character, giving it a destiny different from that of other Jewries, there is only one way it can have acquired it: only through a history of freely, rationally, and creatively grappling with the problems of its group existence and then handing down its own distinctive working hypotheses for further elaboration by continuously succeeding generations. American Jewry has had nothing like three hundred years of this sort of history. American Jewry today is largely in its second generation.

If we operate with native institutions that were initiated before the Eastern European immigration of the 1880's, then most of these, too, are creations of the middle 19th century. The earliest idea evolved and perpetuated to this day in American Jewry can be nothing younger than the Reform movement, which goes back in this country to 1824.

We are, then, one of the youngest of Jewries, one of the youngest even of the surviving Jewries. Our real history begins *after* the “solution” in America of the most critical problem that faced other Jewries in modern times, the problem of the Emancipation of the Jews. This was the problem that other Jewries had to grapple with when they entered the modern world, and the solutions—the conflicting solutions—that they freely, rationally, and creatively evolved for it gave them each their individual character. French Jewry dealt with the issues and problems of Emancipation differently from German Jewry, German Jewry differently from Austro-Hungarian or from Russian Jewry; but all of them had to deal with the problem, and there was a continuity and connection between the solutions they found. What is characteristic of American Jewry, and what makes us different from all of these together is that we began our real history as a post-Emancipation Jewry. Emancipation was never an issue among us, we never argued the problems it presented in America, nor did we ever develop rival ideologies about it and build our institutions with reference to them.

**B**ecause of this the continuity of European Jewry's ideologies is broken in America. We never had ardent groups of partisans in American Jewry who saw in Emancipation the whole solution of the Jewish problem. In Europe the Zionist movement arose in opposition to this thesis, and it proposed “Auto-emancipation” instead of “Emancipa-

tion" as the solution of the Jewish problem. Like Zionism, the theory of "Diaspora nationalism" — the advocacy of minority rights as a solution of the Jewish problem — opposed to the Emancipation principle of individual enfranchisement, the view that the Jews must be granted autonomy as a group, as an ethnic entity. All these theories existed in America only as pale copies of the European originals.

We have in America a small group who vociferously defend Emancipation, the American Council for Judaism. The pointlessness of their propaganda is obvious to anyone who asks himself who among the American Jews is opposed to Emancipation. There is no such group or person, for no one proposes to undo what has been the accepted basis of our life here since before we made any effort to shape our American Jewish history. Nor does the American Council for Judaism defend Emancipation as a solution for the Jewish problem. Their view would be more accurately expressed by the statement of those Yiddish-Socialist ideologues who declared in 1890:

"We have no Jewish question in America. The only question we recognize is the question of how to prevent the emergence of 'Jewish questions' here."

As for the opponents of this view, none of them, either, thinks in terms of a Jewish question which America has been vainly seeking to solve by the emancipation of the Jews, and for which we must seek alternative solutions other than Emancipation. We are only beginning to see what the Jewish question actually is in America.

#### Anti-Semitism and Assimilation

**F**rom a Jewish point-of-view, two elements are inseparable from any discussion of the Jewish problem: anti-Semitism and assimilation. For to a Jew the problem essentially is this: how can the Jewish people survive in the face of hos-

tility which threatens to destroy us, and, on the other hand, in the face of a friendliness that threatens to dissolve our group ties and submerge us as a people by absorbing us individually? Both phases of the Jewish problem are different in America than in Europe, and in both cases the reason is the same: in modern Europe the questions of anti-Semitism and assimilation were essentially connected with the history of Jewish Emancipation, while in America that connection was never part of our history.

All we need do is consider what the Emancipation of the Negroes meant in American political and social history in order to measure the difference between a status that was never really contested, like that of the Jews, and one that it took a civil war to establish, like that of the Negroes. Thus, when we think of anti-Semitism in such countries as France and Germany, Russia and Poland, we must always remember that the great historic revolutions and revolutionary movements in those countries placed upon their agenda for basic reform the Emancipation of the Jews. Whatever has become part of the program of a national revolution not only divides the people at the first shock, but continues to divide them in the cycles of counter-revolution that always attend such upheavals in a nation's life. Hence, as Jewish Emancipation was an issue raised by the Revolution, so anti-Semitism had a natural place in the programs of European counter-revolutionary parties.

How different it was in America at once strikes the eye. If the American Jews never had to divide ideologically over the issue of Emancipation, one of the reasons is that Emancipation of the Jews never became a revolutionary issue dividing the American people generally. For that matter, in the history of America the Revolution itself did not become a real (rather than academic) issue permanently dividing the people, since it

was a revolution against outsiders—and the Loyalists remained in emigration. In England, on the other hand, the Cromwellian revolution was a crux in British history which still serves to determine opposed political attitudes. But at the time of that Glorious Rebellion there were practically no Jews in England. Consequently, at a later time, after the Jews had begun to arrive, the question of their Emancipation was debated in a relatively unimpassioned, desultory way in England, just as in America. Whatever minor political struggles took place in spelling out the equal rights of the Jews had no inherent connection with or essential place in the major upheavals recorded in the national history. To be an anti-Semite in England, as in America, had no obvious, symbolic affinity with a counter-revolutionary ideology opposing the Glorious Rebellion or the American Revolution.

**I**f one examines the American anti-Semitic movements, one cannot fail to appreciate how different they are from their European counterparts. Only in England do we find so anemic, so insignificant an anti-Semitic movement, a movement so unmistakably belonging to the "lunatic fringe."

The anti-Semitic movements of France and Germany, Poland and Russia may also have been fit subjects for psychopathological investigation; but no one will deny that they occupied a place in the forefront of the political affairs of their countries, and moved in (whether with or against) the mainstream of their national history. Far from being "fringe" phenomena, they had political power, or a reasonable chance to attain it. What we have in America, in comparison, is nothing but an aimless hate-mongering. The American kind of anti-Semitism is, and always has been, endemic throughout the Diaspora. It may be found in every social condition and in every political per-

suation, from extreme right to extreme left. It is an anti-Semitism of impulse: the most characteristic thing about it is that it has no clearly enunciated program providing what ought to be done about the Jews if the anti-Semites had their way. This is something quite different from an anti-Semitism that, among other far-reaching social revisions proposed in its counter-revolutionary program, (often long before it attained power!), had precise provisions for making the Jews second class citizens, expelling them, or exterminating them. In comparison with these movements, American anti-Semitism (and, for the most part, British) never reached the level of an historic, politically effective movement. It remained, so to speak, a merely sociological phenomenon.

**T**he question of assimilation also looks different in America, because the Jews never had an established status here other than that of our so-called Emancipation: there never were enough of us here before the 19th century to warrant giving us a special, institutionally established status. In Europe, Emancipation came as an effort to alter a hoary, time-honored status in which Jewish communities lived long before the Revolution.

The Emancipation seemed to promise the Jews that the difference between them and the Gentiles would be reduced to the private realm of religion. All public relations with the Gentiles would be carried on in the neutral area of citizenship, where Jews were guaranteed equality. Jews assumed that the public realm was identical with the whole social realm of intercourse between them and the Gentiles, and that in all other than purely Jewish, religious affairs they would have full and free contact and equal status with Christians. This they soon found to be a delusion, for in all countries they discovered that Jewishness was a barrier and a disability in a wide range of so-



cial relations and that citizenship opened far fewer doors than they had imagined.

In most European countries the areas closed to Jews had been elaborated by centuries of custom and usage. When one had explored the precise extent of new freedoms actually opened to the Jews by the new status of citizenship, the barred contacts remained clearly and decisively, in fact, often quite formally defined.

In all of Europe, Jews soon found that even after Emancipation actual relations in society continued to be governed by a series of restrictions taken from the religiously grounded stratifications of the *ancien régime*. And if you protested that all this was contrary to the new doctrine of citizenship, purporting to open all careers to talent and all doors of social intercourse to individual merit, an answer was soon provided: a still newer doctrine superseded the principle of citizenship, the doctrine of romantic, organic nationalism. The nationalist idea gave a new justification and pumped new life into practices which had theretofore survived as stubborn relics of feudalism and now all at once became grafted onto the modern idea of democracy. Fixed social positions, traditional folkways and culture, inheritance of privileges and obligations—all that had once been grounded in the divine will now gained an organic sanction in the national history. The Jews found their assimilation even more vigorously opposed than under the purely religious criterion. If inheritance (that is, ethnic origin) became the key to admission into society and the license for participation in culture, then even the formal step of conversion was of no avail to the Jew.

**I**n the beginning of the present century the actual social conditions that faced the Jew seeking to be part of his European nationality represented a shifting balance between three competing tendencies. One tendency was that of the Revo-

lution, whose principle was to treat the Jew as an individual no different from all the rest. Actually social relations conformed to this principle only where the Revolution itself, or other forces, had succeeded in atomizing society. The Industrial Revolution and the development of trade allowed Jews to find new opportunities in business and thereby brought them into a new relation of essential equality with Gentiles. The Revolution succeeded in imposing its own forms of social interaction in all political relationships except the bureaucracy. But the Jews could not just move into these new positions unaltered. The principle of equality imposed its conditions and demanded its price. The "clannish" solidarity of the Jews had to be given up so that they could enter the body of citizens as individuals. They could keep their religion as a private cult, but not the kind of religion that was traditional among them. Jewish tradition was too organic in its own way, it incorporated too much historic distinctiveness and ethnic character for the rigid individualism of radical revolutionary doctrine. Not that anyone expected to see the full consequences of these doctrines rigorously applied to Gentile society. But the revolutionary ardor to liberate the Jews had roots of its own in the anti-Semitism that is endemic in all Gentile society and expresses itself in all its divisions. The Jews might not get all they expected out of Emancipation, but the Emancipators were disposed to watch with a jealous eye how the Jews went about paying its full price.

The nobility, the army, the universities, all the corporate embodiments of privilege bearing upon them the stamp of consecration and tradition escaped the leveling influence of Revolution. As Jews rose in society through other channels they found their ultimate elevation blocked at these points. Some through conflict advanced themselves to these positions as

Jews, but most found that access to their goal, otherwise blocked, became magically open through a relatively simple and (in most cases) quite perfunctory operation. So they acquired new "convictions" and became baptized. To the other Jews, this renegadism, as they regarded it, was their first great shocking disillusionment with the Emancipation, the first disclosure of the human degradation which is the price of assimilation. A new strain arose in Jewish-Gentile relations with the development of counter-revolutionary anti-Semitism, absorbing into an ethnic pattern the basic attitudes to the Jews implied in their old feudal, religiously determined status. Conservative anti-Semitism in a liberal society contented itself with excluding Jews from areas of corporate traditionalism which the Revolution had not succeeded in atomizing. Nationalistic counter-revolution, seeking to turn the clock back, opposed the penetration Jews had already made into areas opened up by liberalism. Economic boycotts of the Jews were resorted to in order to bring industry and commerce "back" into the hands of the Germans or the Poles, or whatever the ethnic majority might be.

Particularly did the nationalists resent the great participation of Jews in all cultural activities. The organic doctrine of nationalism sought to overcome a cleavage between culture and tradition that had existed since the Renaissance. Culture in the modern European sense had become a secular realm side by side with the traditional beliefs, art forms, ceremonials and etiquette which were still grounded in religion. The social framework of culture, the *Gelehrtenrepublik*, as the 18th century Germans called it, was a liberal, international, individualistic, and secular intercourse between free spirits, which even before the Revolution existed side by side with the corporate social structures in which the religious,

feudal tradition was fostered. The Revolution was the signal which gave the Jews *entree* into this world. It was a liberty that they eagerly embraced, shut out as they were on other sides from assimilation and its rewards. But it was a main object of counter-revolutionary nationalism to bring all culture back into an organic coherence based on the national tradition, even if both the religious and the secular were adulterated as a result. This meant imposing upon all forms of creative expression the same corporate principles and ethnic criteria that regulated participation in the religiously grounded forms. The participation of Jews in any cultural form was henceforth regarded as an illegitimate intrusion, or even a plot by the enemies of the people to corrupt its national spirit.

Thus there were forces in European society determinedly striving to undo even the amount of assimilation Jews had achieved. They were opposed both to the integration of the Jew into the social relations governed by liberal principles—and to the admission of Jewish converts into those social relations still governed by corporate, religiously grounded criteria.

How different was the situation here in America! Here the bare conditions of geography and social statistics made the liberal principle the dominant form of social organization. It was not so much revolution against an old regime that opened the door to assimilation for the Jews; it was the large extent of sheer formlessness in American society, which allowed Jews as well as many other heterogeneous groups to live side by side, with the forms of their readjustment to each other still to be determined.

Free entry into American society, of course, had its price and also its restrictions, just as did the assimilation of the European Jews after Emancipation. The price of the freedom to let the ultimate

forms of mutual relationship between immigrant Jews (like all immigrants) and the whole American community remain for the future to determine was the willingness of the immigrant to give up old inherited forms. Just as settled America was willing, within limits, to be elastic, so it demanded of immigrants wishing to be naturalized that they first of all be elastic and accommodating. Not that there was any haste about the scrapping of outworn Old World customs. America was large enough to set aside "ghettoes" in its cities or even whole regions in its broad lands where immigrants could live undisturbed more or less as they had been used to live in the Old Country. But this was a provisional form of living more or less outside the real America, which everyone expected to be superseded as the forms of true American living were worked out by immigrant and native Americans in an ongoing process of mutual give and take.

The willingness to relinquish Old World habits was the price of assimilation in America. Its limits were defined by the established prerogatives of the older settlers. It was true that the ultimate forms of American life remained—as they still remain—in principle undetermined, and our assumption is that the cultural contributions of all America's components are equally welcome. Yet it is both implicitly and explicitly assumed, that those who came here first are entitled to preserve and impose such forms of living as they have already made part of the American way. America is not only in essence free and democratic; it is also, in its established pattern, Anglo-Saxon, religiously multi-denominational, and dominated by the mentality of white, Protestant, middle class, native Americans. However, this social dominance and cultural predominance are maintained not by delimiting any areas of social life under traditional, religiously grounded, and formally elaborated codes of exclu-

sion which reserve them for particular families or religions, as in Europe. Our American history has not been long enough for that, perhaps, and in any case it has from the start consecrated the principles of complete social mobility, denying in theory all exclusions. But the claims and privileges of the old settlers are maintained by informal, almost tacit social covenants, which only rarely (as in our Immigration Act) need to be openly voiced.

Thus if liberal principles fail to be actually observed in America, just as in Europe, and if assimilation stops short at the barriers set up to protect inherited privilege, there is at last this difference: in Europe the status with which we begin is the historical, quasi-feudal status, and liberalism rules only those areas which it specifically conquers; in America the initial status is that of freedom, and only experience proves what areas privilege has successfully reserved for itself. Those in America who nurse a nostalgia for historically rooted social status have not been able to swim in the mid-current of an American counter-revolutionary movement. The American Revolution is the very beginning of our real history, and there is no one who more proudly flaunts it as his symbol than the American conservative. The self-conscious American opponent of the liberal revolution has no real alternative but to become an expatriate.

**T**he result has been that while the history of American Jewish assimilation too has been full of disappointment and unanticipated checks, it has run a characteristically different course from the typical European experience. At the very outset of the European Emancipation, Jews were brusquely confronted with the price they must pay: for freedom of the individual, virtual dissolution of the group. The immigrant to these shores, too, found the prize of American-

ization was to be won at a price: unre-served elasticity in discarding everything which America might find foreign. In both cases, only religion was reserved as a sanctuary of Jewish tradition. But there were these differences: in Europe, there was a fixed pattern that Jews were expected to adopt in discarding their own customs; in America the ultimate American way of life was still in principle to be determined, taking into account what of their own the immigrants might succeed in "selling" to the whole public. Besides, the demands of the Emancipation upon the Jews were peremptory, they had to be conceded at once, and even through a formal declaration such as Napoleon extracted from the French Jews. In America there was no urgency about the procedure. The Jews, like other immigrants, could make their way into the real American community as swiftly or as slowly as they themselves chose. They could, if they preferred, remain in their ghetto seclusion indefinitely.

In Europe, then, the stick; in America the carrot. A parallel difference existed when the Jews came up against the unexpected barriers to assimilation, the reserved areas not governed by liberal principles. In Europe the principle of exclusion was clearcut, traditional—and quite simply overcome, if one wished, by conversion. There was no such clear choice in America. Established privileges were no less alien to this country than an established church. It was neither the accepted practice to demand conversion for specific social promotions, nor to grant them upon conversion. Thus, if American Jews went over to Christianity, it was no such concerted wave as arose in Germany, in the first eagerness to overleap the unexpected sectarian barrier to full assimilation. It was rather a final seal, in individual cases, upon assimilation otherwise complete. American Jews ebbed away rather than turned away from the mother stream.

### The Patterns of Modern Jewish Thought

It is clear, then, that the typical situation faced by the American Jew was not the same as that characteristic of the European Continent. The differences apply to both major aspects of the Jewish problem, to anti-Semitism and to the processes of assimilation. But modern Zionism, and indeed all modern Jewish ideologies, arose when Jews began to confront, to take account of, and to understand—or even to "reach an understanding" with—the typical situation of Continental Europe. The characteristic American Jewish situation had hardly even begun to be faced—until the establishment of the Jewish State abruptly forced us to face it. It need not be surprising, then, if at precisely this time we witness a feverish effort to create a new American Zionism and new American Jewish ideologies generally; nor that these forced-draught efforts should in the beginning often bring more confusion than enlightenment.

What was the historical situation of Continental Jewry in the late 19th century, when the modern Jewish ideologies arose? As we have seen, it was characteristically a period of post-revolutionary or, if we may say so, neo-traditionalist nationalism, a period with a living memory of an *ancien régime*, a revolutionary movement, and a wave of post- or even counter-revolutionary reactions. Moreover, the Jewish problem was intimately involved with every phase of that living tradition.

The spirit of that time was critical of the Enlightenment and the Revolution, of rationalism, capitalism, and social relationships based on the undifferentiated equality of citizenship. For the modern European, the Jew became a symbolic embodiment of all these discredited traits. For the out-and-out anti-Semites (but not only for them), the Jew was the



head and fount of everything they despised in the liberal revolution—its rationalism, capitalism, and principle of civic equality. Similarly, of course, the rebels against the *ancien régime* had seen in the ghetto a symbol of the medievalism they were determined to uproot. And if the Revolution had proposed the assimilation of the Jews in all respects except as a reformed religious sect, the critics of the Revolution wanted to solve their Jewish problem by halting or reversing the assimilation that had already taken place and eliminating Jews and Jewish influence from the new order they hoped to set up.

What had made one a modern Jew in the late 18th century was to have understood and accepted the attitude of Gentile contemporaries to social problems, and to the Jewish problem among them. The modern Jews of that time accepted the demands of the Enlightenment to change their habits and customs—those relics of medievalism—in order to enter a new enfranchised status; on the other hand they could not understand or accept the exclusions still practiced against them after they had paid this entry fee. But the modern Jew of the late 19th century “understood” fundamentally, however much it may have pained him, why it was that he was not assimilated into full fellowship in his country. He shared with the modern Gentile the feeling that European society had not yet become what it should be, or that it had even gone astray from its true path. Thus, integration into society on the basis of the liberal principles of the Revolution no longer seemed to be the solution of his Jewish problem. In fact, the degree to which that integration had already taken place, in culture, in economic pursuits, and even in political participation began to constitute for him, as for the Gentile, the very crux of the Jewish problem, the false position in which both danger and self-denial dwelt. He, like the Gentile,

began to see or foresee other solutions of the Jewish problem as part of a new revolution of the whole structure of European society, in the course of which Jews would either disappear entirely as an entity or regroup in a new segregation from the Gentiles. “Modern” Jews hoped either for a radical revision of the liberal revolution, leading to socialism and the disappearance of Judaism together with all other religions, or for a new nationalist era in which Jews would live as a distinct national entity in the places where they then lived or in a new national territory; in other words, either total assimilation in a new, millennial secular society, without the 18th century reservation of freedom to maintain a reformed Jewish religious community, or the total rejection of assimilation and the attempt to establish a new Jewish ethnic independence, in the several countries of Europe or in a new territory to be colonized by Jews.

The rejection of assimilation was thus a doctrine shared by Zionists with other ethnic autonomists. The failure of Emancipation represented, from this point of view, a breach of faith by the Gentile Emancipators and a historical error on the part of the Jews; for after the latter had practically reformed themselves out of existence as a historic group, Gentile society had failed to keep its part of the bargain by assimilating the Jews individually. Zionism, however, viewed with a disenchanted eye not only the liberalism of the Gentiles. Unlike other modern Jewish movements, it also had its reservations concerning those Gentile movements which, like itself, were critical of existing society and hoped to reconstruct it. Jewish Marxism, regarding the Jewish problem as an expression of capitalism that would disappear in the classless society, implied the faith that one's Gentile fellow-Socialists would not break their covenant as had the Gentile

liberals. The advocates of national autonomy for minorities in Europe similarly trusted that Gentiles would abide by the covenants that embody this principle. Zionism had no faith in the willingness of the Gentiles to extend a welcome to Jews, under any definition, as free and equal brethren in the same land. It was a disillusionment built upon experience with Socialist leaders, for example, who had viewed calmly the Jewish blood spilt in pogroms, counting it all to the good as "grease on the wheels of the revolution."

Zionism took anti-Semitism seriously and expected it to persist. This is the specific way in which it differed from other modern Jewish ideologies. The Socialists, who expected to submerge the Jews in classless, cosmopolitan society, the Diaspora nationalists, who planned for minority rights—none could hope to succeed unless anti-Semitism vanished. The Zionist (and territorialist) solution of the Jewish problem, contemplating the removal of the Jews from Europe, remained intrinsically possible even if one were pessimistic or prudent enough to reckon with the persistence of anti-Semitism among the Gentiles.

Zionism, like other modern Jewish ideologies, felt it understood the critics of European liberalism (among them, the anti-Semites) and their disapproval of the liberal solution of the Jewish problem. Accepting, as they did, the organic ethnic views of history and nationality, they felt it was a betrayal both of the Gentile and the Jewish national destiny for Jews to make themselves the protagonists of Gentile culture, for example, instead of fostering their own. Moreover, they appreciated that if it were the aim of a group to use all sources of power in a given territory for the preservation and propagation of its distinct national values, its traditional style of life and culture, its own ethnic variant of Christianity, then it was bound to be resented when political and economic power came

into the hands of Jews. Such an attitude left only one possibility for a compact between Jews and Gentiles that the two distinct groups could loyally uphold: those Jews who could not or would not assimilate must have a country of their own where they would be independent.

Two things are characteristic of American Jewish ideologies. The first is that American Jews never faced directly the whole historic complex of problems, centering around the traumatic event of Emancipation, from which modern Jewish ideologies arose. The second is that only in our own time, actually in these very years since World War II, has American Jewry begun to face its own peculiar situation and to create its own history. One could conclude, then, that American Jewish ideological development may still not really have begun.

Whatever truth there may be in such a conclusion, it need not mean that we have had no differences of opinion, no debates until now. This is obviously untrue, for whatever ideology existed in Europe has had its adherents, few or many, here. Thus American Zionism, for example, arose by understanding and sharing in the typical attitudes, problems, and situation of Zionism in Europe—especially in the degree that American Zionists continued in America to live the life of the Old Country.

Now it was generally characteristic not only of American Zionism, or of American Jewry, or even of all immigrants, but of America itself to share and understand the life and thoughts, the trends of modern culture and politics in the Old World. Those newcomers who lived in the immigrant ghettos shared (at least, the cultural elite among them) the life of the Old World most directly and most specifically. Those older settlers (again, the cultural elite among them) who were establishing the permanent forms of American life also continued to live in

the current of European political and cultural development, though with greater detachment and in a more general form—it was a more international European culture, and not so specifically a particular national culture in which they shared. As for the culture arising in America itself: the specific “culture” native to the immigrant ghettos was not only based on an obviously transitory experience but also on an experience of suffering rather than of creation. And “permanent” American culture remained intrinsically open, partially unformed, constituting in a way, a set of defensible hypotheses rather than a body of axioms and absolute values.

Only in our own time has the characteristic American Jewish type come to be the native-born American Jew. American Zionism was a product of an earlier generation, it was to a large extent a product of the American immigrant ghetto. Thus, intellectually, it shared and understood the Zionism of the “modern” European Jew of the 19th century, just as the other immigrant ghettos shared in and understood the social and intellectual movements of the Old Country they came from. The immigrant intellectuals who created American Zionism had a more direct and more specific understanding of the situation, problems and attitudes of the “modern” Jew than is possible for the native American Jew. Yet even for them European Zionism was a *vicarious* experience.

It was natural, therefore, that even for the immigrants, new American experiences—the experience of the American immigrant ghetto, and the unfolding experience of the new American society in formation—began to color their Zionism. The nuances by which American Zionism was touched through its naturalization in America have now, in a time when American Jewry is native-born and when Eastern European Jewry is no longer a force, become the dominant color-

tion of a new American Zionism.

The two major divisions of the Jewish problem, assimilation and anti-Semitism, look different against an American environment. The theory of assimilation as a solution of the Jewish problem was a revolt against an old established historic status of the Jews in Europe, into which they had sunk vast creative energies. The “Ghetto” in Europe was not only an oppression the Jews suffered but a way of life they clung to. And when the reaction against assimilationism came in European Jewry, it paralleled in a way the post-revolutionary movements among the Gentiles: it saw itself as the synthetic conclusion of a Hegelian dialectical process. The Emancipation had been an antithesis of that thesis which had been the Ghetto; and Zionism (like other modern Jewish movements), in transcending the Emancipation, intended to absorb what was valuable not only in the liberal revolution but in the primary status—the Ghetto—which assimilationism had rejected.

“Assimilationism” in America was a rejection of life in the immigrant ghetto. But that life in the tenements had never been filled with any creative significance, no values had been placed upon it and institutionalized through it, it contained no unfulfilled promises, no high demands spontaneously arising from its own context to give historic dimensions to its past and historic perspectives to its future. The immigrant ghetto from the beginning was entered into only to be abandoned. For the Jewish immigrants it represented either the collapse and bereavement of the old values of the true, historic, European Ghetto—or, if they had already emancipated themselves from the historic Jewish values, it was a “melting pot,” a grimy anteroom to the real America, a sordid extension of Ellis Island.

The generation that entered the immigrant ghetto was confronted by one over-

whelming task: to get out, or enable the next generation to get out. This task they accomplished. But the generation that accomplished it, in a way, had stepped out of the frame of history, for history consists in whatever continues over a span of successive generations. The immigrant ghetto was not a continuation of the context of European Jewish life, whether Ghetto or emancipated; it was an interruption of that continuity, a break with that context. Nor did it, nor was it ever intended to continue into the life of the next generation.

There was nonetheless a very active cultural life and a vivid sense of history in the Jewish immigrant ghetto. That generation reached an unsurpassed peak of historical awareness as Jews. And, concomitantly, they led a life of high cultural intensity. But the historical movements and cultural trends in which American Jews participated were European Jewish history and European Jewish culture, relevant to the situations and problems and expressing the values of European Jewry. The social reality of American Jewry was the one-generation experience of the immigrant ghetto, known from its very inception to be out of the frame of history and culture. Of course, American Jewry could never accept a merely vicarious participation in history and a merely nostalgic participation in culture, however intense these might be. The immigrant generation felt itself to be as much (if not more) a new beginning as a final chapter in the historic and cultural continuity of the Jews. They looked to the day when the threads of vicarious history and cultural nostalgia would weave into a new American pattern of continuity. But every American Jew, whatever his ideological sympathy—religious or secular, Zionist or non-Zionist, “survivalist” or “assimilationist”—knew beyond any question that the new hoped-for continuity that would transmit the American Jewish experience

into history and culture must necessarily begin beyond the threshold of the immigrant ghetto.

If, then, “assimilationism” means radically to reject the “institutions” of the ghetto—in America, of the *immigrant* ghetto—then every American Jew, whatever his ideology, is an “assimilationist.” And, in fact, the actual process of “assimilation” in the United States *is* the absorption of immigrants out of the immigrant ghettos. This is a movement in social relationships which it is common ground for every American Jew to accept. When “assimilation” served as an issue between American Jews it was not the actual process of assimilation out of the immigrant ghetto into the real American society about which they were debating: their argument was about assimilation as it occurred in Europe.

The differences of opinion native to the American Jewish experience are only now beginning to be defined. They arise only after assimilation out of the immigrant ghetto has not only been tacitly accepted in principle but carried out in practice. Assimilation can only become an issue in terms of the actual experience dividing the American Jews after the liquidation of the immigrant ghetto. At that point, when he is an “integrated” member of American society, the American Jew—now typically native-born—discovers that he still has a problem of assimilation. The problem is a totally new one, it presents the first challenge whose creative mastery might establish a continuous American Jewish historic tradition. If we may speak in terms of the Hegelian dialectic at all in America, then we are only at the point of establishing a thesis—not, as in Europe, capping an historic antithesis with its synthetic resolution.

In view of this fact it should not be surprising if American Jews are unwilling to begin their history with the disil-



lusioned conclusion that they can come to no satisfactory terms with the Gentiles for the creative survival of the Jewish people in America. Nor should it be surprising that in looking backwards for its supports in history, no portion of American Jewry seeks to recapture any values institutionalized and expressed in the characteristic experience of the immigrant ghetto. Nor, finally, should it be surprising—however little gratifying we may find it—that the first attempts to set up American Jewish ideologies are based on a rather empty, almost defiant optimism about Jewish survival in the Diaspora and a somewhat boastful, booster-style confidence in the values we will yet produce.

**T**he question of anti-Semitism also looks different when viewed from an American perspective. In the past, to be sure, American Zionists and anti-Zionists have divided ideologically in their reactions to anti-Semitism almost entirely in relation to the nationalistic anti-Semitic movement of Europe. The anti-Zionist view was that, even if the Jewish status of Emancipation liberalism was inadequate, Jewish ideology must have as its premise the full confidence that anti-Semitism must and will disappear in a new Gentile society. The Zionist premise was that modern nationalistic anti-Semitism would not disappear, and that where it had once appeared Jewish life would increasingly become intolerable.

But the characteristic fact about America was that modern nationalistic anti-Semitism had not really appeared here. Moreover, the historic grounds for its appearance were lacking. The Jews in America did not come out of a medieval ghetto through an act of emancipation, to find that, as a bourgeois people, they aroused nationalistic anti-Semitism. They filtered out of an immigrant ghetto not as a people but individually. They encountered anti-Semitism in America, but

it was not based on a nationalistic reaction, rejecting the emancipation of the Jews. The native American anti-Semitism encountered here was the old perennial anti-Semitism in which Herzl discriminated the elements of "cruel sport, of common commercial rivalry, of inherited prejudice, of religious intolerance." This was a kind of anti-Semitism which neither Zionism nor any other modern Jewish movement could or would withstand. It was the type of anti-Semitism with which only the medieval ghetto had provided a certain established basis of understanding.

It is true, on the other hand—and very significantly—that European anti-Semitism was able to extend its influence across the Atlantic and demonstrated on numerous critical occasions that the fate and destiny of American Jewry were intimately connected with the fate and destiny of European Jewry. But at other times, the global threat to the Jews having subsided, the American Jews who busied themselves with the matter were faced with the problem of their own, specifically American anti-Semitism. This problem never really became an ideological issue between Zionists and non-Zionists in America any more than did the problem of American assimilation.

At most there was a difference in the degree of concern about native anti-Semitism between Zionists and non-Zionists, a sort of temperamental difference rooted quite remotely in difference of ideas. The Zionist attitude, at bottom, assumes anti-Semitism to be ineradicable. With nationalistic secularist anti-Semitism, Zionism once hoped for an understanding through divorce. But where anti-Semitism remains theological, demanding perpetuation of the Jewish Exile till the Second Advent and the subjugation of Jews to Christians in the meantime, Zionism has no understanding to propose. Thus the characteristic attitude of American Zionism to this problem—that is to

say, to native American anti-Semitism—is not to take it too seriously, to feel that it is essentially a Gentile, not a Jewish problem. On the other hand, it is characteristic of non-Zionism to take precisely this problem seriously. Non-Zionists were likely to turn a blind eye to the seriousness of nationalistic anti-Semitism as we saw it in Europe, rejecting the notion that Jews should attempt any “understanding” with Gentiles through emigration. The basis for this attitude was a belief that anti-Semitism was not really a “modern” movement, with more vitality and contemporaneity than the Emancipation of the Jews, but only a medieval survival that would expire with the inevitable increase of rationality. Among the “missions” which non-Zionism proposed for the Jewish Diaspora, one which was taken up with great earnestness in every country, and in America as well, was to cure the Gentiles of their vestigial anti-Semitism and so to consummate fully the Jewish Emancipation. But whether this is at all conceivable, assuming that Jews remain a distinct entity in the Diaspora, is a problem the new American Jewish ideologists, including the Zionists, still have to face.

**T**he crucial difference which has been brought about in the Jewish problem in the past generation is not only the rise of the State of Israel, but perhaps even more the destruction of European Jewry. This is a factor whose significance is likely to be overlooked because it is a negative factor—and one, of course,

which it is anything but pleasant to remember. Without European Jewry, the face of the Jewish problem as it appears to American Jews is radically altered, and in a way simplified. Hitherto, thoughts about the Jewish problem, in its two aspects of assimilation and anti-Semitism, were based on our European traditions and, no less, upon our involvement with the European Jewish situation. But now we live in a Jewish world where, essentially, we see only two main constituents: ourselves, American Jewry, and the State of Israel. In Israel, the Jewish problem of assimilation and anti-Semitism does not exist, or only in the most indirect and transmuted form. It continues to exist for us. But the problems of assimilation and anti-Semitism exist only in the forms native to America, without the overtones of significance previously lent to these problems through their involvement with the developments in Europe. That simplifies the situation considerably.

We cannot say as confidently that it clarifies it as well. The nature of the Jewish problem characteristic of America has not hitherto been considered with the degree of rigor and incisiveness that we found in our European ideologies. That was natural so long as the American situation was regarded as an atypical and not too significant variant of the Jewish problem. It now becomes the major exemplification of that problem in our times. That fact requires, as it is beginning to produce, a new focus in the direction of Jewish thought.

D. R. ELSTON is better known to the reading public as David Courtney, under which name he writes his "Column One" comments in the *Jerusalem Post*. In this article he analyzes the Israel national elections, held on July 26, in which the extremist groups on the "left" and the "right" showed unexpected strength.

## The Third Knesset

By D. R. ELSTON

**O**n January 25th, 1949, just over 440,000 persons in Israel, being over 18 years of age and in possession of an identity card, voted for the first Constituent Assembly of the State of Israel, then only eight months old. It was an exciting day, wind-blown and squally as I remember it. The electors of town and village and settlement came out in their Sabbath-best to exercise a democratic right that convinced them of the reality of their statehood more surely even than the Proclamation of Independence uttered eight months before. Soberly they filed into the polling-booths, dropped the flimsy squares of paper into ballot-boxes that had come straight from the carpenters' shops and then went off to speculate on the probable composition of their First Knesset.

Three years later, in the autumn of 1951, 695,000 voters went to the polls to elect the Second Knesset—over a quarter of a million more than in 1949. Most of the new voters were strangers to Israel and to the practices of Democracy. But they were still on the high, exalting tide of the "ingathering," and voted, in the main, for the men who had seemed to them to be conspicuously the "ingatherers." Mapai increased its vote from 155,274 to 256,456 and its percentage of the total vote from 35.7 to 37.3. The General Zionists however, went up from 22,661 to 111,394; it is probable that this

Party's new supporters included many who had voted for Mapai in 1949 and had shifted their allegiance because of dissatisfaction with Mapai Ministers held responsible for a rationing policy that had been inefficiently applied.

When the Second Knesset ended last July, the electorate had risen to over a million and on election day July 26, 1955, 876,000 voters went to the polls to elect the Third Knesset of the State of Israel. They did so in a surprising manner, which shamefully confounded every prophet and disconcerted the two main parties of the outgoing Knesset, Mapai and the General Zionists. Some surprises were expected, of course. In something over six years the electorate had doubled and so had the number of persons taking the trouble to cast their votes. Observers might have realized from this that there was a 50 per cent margin for surprise: perhaps not quite 50 per cent if you exclude those groups of new voters who can usually be expected to follow a sectional or sectarian lead, as in the case of fervently religious families. But most of the new electors represented, not a "floating vote" but a malleable vote: a community politically unformed and unshaped. The only Party that set out deliberately to mold this pliant vote was Mr. Beigin's right-wing, nationalist Herut, which was rewarded by an increase from 45,651 votes in 1951 (49,782 in 1949)

to 107,190 votes, or from 6.6 per cent of the total votes cast in 1951 to 12.6 of the total last July.

Broadly speaking, then, the 1949 Knesset was the outcome of a fairly homogeneous electorate which already had a national, democratic tradition, and, in spite of the diversity of its party politics, had had its national unity knit closer by the common hazards of war and the pride of victory. The 1951, or Second Knesset, was the outcome of a much less homogeneous electorate. On the other hand, the unabsorbed, unintegrated newcomers were still fresh in Zion and still sustained psychologically by the spirit of the return. Mapai profited from this. It had been conspicuous in the "ingathering" and was now conspicuous, through the Jewish Agency and Histadrut institutions it controlled, in the provision of work and housing. Its electoral profit would have been more obvious if it had not lost much of the floating vote of the old Yishuv to the General Zionists, who also took away votes from Beigin's Herut Party and increased their representation in the Knesset from seven seats to twenty.

**T**he 1955, or Third Knesset, is the outcome of an utterly divided electorate. For every voter of the Mayflower generation, that is to say the old, solidly established *Yishuv*, there was now a voter come since the establishment of the State from central and eastern Europe, from Yemen, Iraq and North Africa and even, some of them, from Cochin China. Against the relatively stable and well-to-do community of 1949 there was a community of equal numbers with a background of hardship and insecurity and, in Zion, a growing feeling, encouraged by political agitation, of under-privilege. By and large it was a community of grievance, not always or usually justified but for the most part explicable. The majority of these people had come to Israel under the persuasion

that it was again a land of promise in which they would be able to live happily ever afterward. That was their conception of Democracy in Zion. It still uplifted them in 1951 but by 1955 it had let them down badly—or so, by the tedium of bad housing, partial employment and work they were unaccustomed to, by the effect on their nerves of perpetual frontier alarm, and under the tutelage of political extremists, they were led to believe.

Each of Israel's three general elections has been held, therefore, against a background wholly different from the other. Each of them nevertheless was thoroughly democratic not merely in technique but also in principle, in spite of the fact that nearly half the 1955 electorate had only a hazy notion of the responsibilities and privileges of Democracy. Many of them had never voted before in their lives. Few of them had ever before had a government they could call their own. If in the July elections they felt they had grievances they also felt they had one magnificent right—the right, each one of them, woman as well as man, to take a slip of paper without anybody's watching, fold it into an envelope and drop the envelope into a secret ballot-box and so do something on the grand scale to redress their grievances. The slip of voting paper may have been ill-chosen. Instead of democratically making up their own minds about the Party to vote for, they may have let their personal grievances, blown up to more than life-size by eloquent political campaigners, make it up for them. They may have confused personal interest with national interest and petty irritation with major wrong. No matter. Few of us can rise above personal interest, especially when an eloquent politician comes along and teases us into believing ourselves down-trodden or ill-used. Democracy, like everything else of any value, has to be learned, not from books or speeches but from experience. Israel's widening



electorate, which already recognizes the value and purpose of Democracy, will learn quickly; for never in history has there been such a forcing-nursery for democrats as this little country.

The electorate being what it was last July, surprises, as I have said, should have been expected. If they were not expected, at least not in the measure they came, that may be because nobody thought the big national parties, like Mapai and the General Zionists, would be unaware of the sense of grievance among the new immigrants who formed such a large part of the electorate, and would leave that sense of grievance to be exploited by the extreme parties. They should have been aware of it well before the elections. Newspaper correspondents visiting any of the big *ma'abarot*, or work-camps, over the past year were made aware of it the moment they had passed through the *ma'abara* gates.

At the southern edge of Jerusalem, sprawled against the slope of a Judaean ridge that slips over into Jordan territory, is the Talpith *ma'abara*—a hot, dry, dusty encampment in the summer; a muddy, dripping, wind-flapping conglomeration of huts and tents in the winter; always a quarrelsome community, which welfare organizations and institutions of the State, the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut do much to keep in health and some kind of content, but which is tired of waiting for proper housing, full employment as laborers, or the opportunity to set up as tradesmen or craftsmen, and has come to the conclusion that economic absorption means partial employment and over-crowding, while social integration with the other Israel community is an illusion.

The moment a foreign correspondent enters this encampment he is seized upon by groups of men and women who shout at him: "We have no real work. Come and look at the huts we live in. Don't believe what the Government and the

Jewish Agency tell you. Come and talk with us." Now, I am told that these people are, in fact, the dupes of Herut agitators. They may be. And I know that conditions in the Talpith *ma'abara* could be worse and that bit by bit the residents of the camp are being taken out to better housing. I know also that the *ma'abarot* in general are being gradually done away with and that, with luck, in a year or two these wretched people will be living in better conditions than now. The fact remains that, however exaggerated their complaints, and however much agitators may be responsible for their demonstrations, their feeling of grievance is deep and obvious and should not have been left to Mr. Beigin to exploit.

Only a very small percentage of the new immigrants who have come to Israel since 1948 live in encampments like the one at Talpith. But a big percentage lives in overcrowded quarters in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Tel Aviv. Some have taken to farming in smallholders' settlements and many of them make a living as small shopkeepers. The discontent of those who are still awaiting permanent work and decent housing is shared by the little shopkeepers, of whom there are too many for the available customers, and by the plumbers, carpenters, painters and other small, self-employed workers and traders who blame the Government for poor business and small profits, most of which, they complain, goes to the income-tax collector. A grievance common to them all, from the *ma'abara* dweller to the kiosk seller of lemonades and cigarettes, from the partially employed roadworker to his wife, who trudges from household to household scrubbing floors at so much an hour, is the State's habit of conscripting into the army their sons and daughters just at the age when they could help out the family budget by earning a wage.

Let it be understood that I have given an electoral picture. I have tried to show

the new electorate in relation to the way it voted last July. To that extent it is the truth, but not by any means the whole truth; for it is a fact that much progress has been made by the State in absorbing the newcomers economically, although perhaps not absorbing them socially to the same extent. It is also a fact that if less has been done for the newcomers than they felt they had a right to expect, that is because far more has been done towards ensuring the security and bringing nearer the ultimate economic self-sufficiency of the nation than anyone had a right to expect in such a short time and with the disadvantage of poor natural resources and hostile neighbors.

From this point of view the record of the First and Second Knessets is a good record. That being so, the record of the dominant Government Party of those two parliaments, Mapai, is a good record; and from that it seems only fair to go forward and share out the praise among the other constituents of the various Mapai-led coalition Governments that have administered the country with astonishing stability between 1949 and the adjournment of the Second Knesset in July of this year to make room for the Third in August.

**B**ut when a large part of the electorate is socially and politically primitive, straightforward records of national accomplishment are not enough to win votes. National interest among these politically immature people begins and ends with family interest; the national economy is bounded by the kitchen walls—if, indeed, a separate kitchen there is—and by the pay envelope. Even the great problem of private enterprise (represented by the General Zionist Party) versus the powerful co-operative sector (represented mainly by Mapai) is reduced in the minds of these people to a matter of street-corner kiosks and tiny grocery-shops. The peddler of shoelaces cannot be expected to care whether General Zion-

ist big business or Mapai's co-operative enterprises are discriminated against by the Government department handing out import licenses.

As for imaginative Zionism, or pioneering, or any of the usual visionary ideals of national leaders, after a few years of flimsy huts in dusty over-crowded compounds, or little grocery-shops with a competitor a block away and an income-tax collector around the corner, after living for several years four, five and six to a room, people have little taste or time for vision and small patience even for the visions of the great.

This writer attended an enormous mass rally organized by Mapai in the quarter of Jerusalem known as the German Colony. It is a quarter lodging, in fine old Arab houses, three or four times as many people as were ever intended to be lodged in these fine old houses. Most of the residents are Czech, Yugoslav, Iraqi, Tunisian and Moroccan newcomers. Adjoining this quarter is Bak'a, which is even more over-crowded; and not far away is the Talpioth *ma'abara*. This was a Mapai rally, for which a big football field had been turned into a presentable stadium. It was a very special occasion because Mr. Ben-Gurion himself was to be the speaker. Microphones and lighting had been rehearsed the night before (to the distress of everyone in the quarter and especially the awakened babies); motorized "barkers" had gone up and down the city announcing the event; it had been advertised in the newspapers and on the billboards and by leaflet; and the Mapai organizers had arranged to transport many hundreds of people from the new immigrant settlements of the Jerusalem Corridor.

Over 12,000 people filled the grounds. Probably two-thirds of them represented the new electorate. Before the big moment a band played and a choir sang. Then uniformed members of a youth movement, each holding a tall staff from which the standard of Israel flew, lined

up at the sides and back of the raised dais; and with a blare of trumpets the great man himself, David Ben-Gurion, upon whose personality and reputation Mapai had largely staked its election fortunes, appeared before the microphone and began to speak. The crowd leaned forward, hushed and eager. And what did they hear, these disappointed, grievance-ridden people?

They were told about the need for electoral reform. They were told how the multiple party system was inefficient and should be replaced by a modification of the Anglo-Saxon constituency and personal candidate system. This went on for a long time and was, no doubt, worth listening to by those interested in the question of electoral reform. It is a fair guess that not more than ten per cent of the audience that night cared twopence what electoral system was practiced in Israel, or understood the difference in principle or effect between one system and another. They shifted in their seats, rubbed their noses, scratched the backs of their heads, and wondered, some of them, how electoral reform could give them a decent house and more wages to catch up with rising prices.

Half way through his speech Mr. Ben-Gurion dropped electoral reform and picked up the Negev. This is his darling subject. It is the apple of his visionary eye. But to most of his audience that night the Negev was a barren waste, a land of heat, sandstorm, Egyptian grenades—and loneliness. They wanted none of it.

It was a polite audience. At the end of his speech Mr. Ben-Gurion was given the applause befitting his personality and great deeds.

A few nights before the big Mapai rally, in a vacant lot not far from where Ben-Gurion spoke, Menahem Beigin addressed 15,000 people. He offered them peace—even if it took a war to get it. He offered them more work, cheaper food, better opportunities to start little busi-

nesses that would not be crowded out either by General Zionist big business or by Mapai's co-operative big business. He promised to break the hold of the Histadrut, which exacts all kinds of dues from workers and controls the national labor exchanges. The people cheered. They cheered enthusiastically. Were they being undemocratic, silly victims of a demagogue, or just plainly human? Anyway, many of them, and of their kind throughout the country, voted for Herut and not for Mapai or the General Zionists.

There is, however, another important side to any analysis of the July election figures. I have tried to explain why the two big parties of the last Knesset did less well than they should have done and less well than they may have deserved. But it should be clearly understood that there was no drastic "swing" of votes, no violent new trend in the electorate. If you take the main Histadrut parties—Mapai, Ahdut Avoda, Mapam and Hapoel Hamizrahi, and include the center party Progressives, you will find that this group polled 61.1 per cent of the total votes cast in July. In the 1951 elections they polled 60.5 per cent of the total votes; and in 1949 (when Hapoel Hamizrahi was part of a unified religious bloc) 68.7 per cent. The two right-wing parties, the General Zionists and Herut, together polled 22.8 per cent of the total vote last July, or exactly the same proportion as in 1951. In 1949 their percentage of total votes cast was only 16.7.

What this means in effect is that the balance of the new Knesset as between left and right remains pretty much what it was, with the orthodox religious parties firmly entrenched in a key position between the two but—perhaps oddly when one thinks of the relationship between religious political groups of Europe and the secular parties—leaning in sympathy rather towards the left than the right. Within the left combination, the balance has been changed to the disadvantage of

the most moderate constituent, Mapai, which, however, remains far and away the biggest single party of the group and of the Knesset and therefore the party of greatest influence. Within the right group, the balance has been drastically changed to the disadvantage of the more moderate and responsible of the two parties, the General Zionists, who, however, with 13 Knesset seats against Herut's 15, must continue to exercise far bigger political influence than Herut because of the much larger economic interests it represents and because of the party's much stronger influence in the Zionist movement in the United States.

If Israel's last general elections are looked at in this way, it will be seen that the voter has changed very little in fact but has given a strong warning to the traditional administering forces of the country. To what extent did that warning arise out of the economic and social discontent of the new electorate and to what extent out of dissatisfaction with the frontier policy of the outgoing Government, and of what had been, until a few weeks before the elections, its two main props — Mapai and the General Zionists? This question of the effect of the last Government's frontier policy on the electorate, new and old alike, is one of the most difficult to answer. To be sure, people's nerves were on edge as a result of constant border incidents, in which settlers and soldiers were being killed and wounded with appalling regularity. What, then, did the electorate want? More reprisals and a determined policy of "activism" — to use a horrid word that has become popular? Or war itself to teach the neighbors a lesson once and for all — if such lessons ever settle anything once and for all?

**B**elief that the public wanted a more activist policy derived not only from the success of Herut, but also from the success, away to the left, of a new party — new, that is to say, as a separate list

seeking Knesset representation: the party of Ahdut Avoda, which considers itself heir to the traditions and spirit of the Palmach, and the popular leader of which, Yigal Alon, was himself a Palmach commander and one of the most dashing and skillful commanders in the field during the war with the Arabs in 1948. Ahdut Avoda, with its main support in the kibbutz movement, was at one time the left faction of Mapai. It broke away from that party in the forties and joined to form the extreme left Mapam group. Last year Ahdut Avoda decided to stand on its own as a separate party with a separate program, midway between Mapam and Mapai. It may have had a secret longing to get close again to its first love. At any rate it is on record as favoring participation in a left coalition including Mapam and, if not, in a narrower coalition dedicated to "pioneering" and determined to make the life of the frontier settler stable and secure. But where Herut, in its election campaign, bitterly attacked piecemeal reprisal in the border areas as a waste of lives and time, bringing no profit in territory or prestige or any real security, Ahdut Avoda let it be known that it favored counter-action in kind to border attacks carried out by Arabs.

Ahdut Avoda polled 69,475 votes out of the total of 876,000 votes, or 8.1 per cent. Having returned, so to speak, to Zion after losing its way in the cloudy quasi-Communism and anti-western fulminations of Mapam, Ahdut Avoda expected to take away some votes from its old ally. But Mapam, with 62,401 votes, held its own. The two parties together, which had 86,095 votes in 1951, had 131,876 in 1955. This combined vote cannot be regarded as an "activist" vote; for, Mapam did not make a point of "activism" during the election campaign and Ahdut Avoda did. It is therefore probably true to say that Ahdut Avoda's 69,475 voters want firmer military action along the borders and are indifferent to



any likely Western response to such action. But Ahdut Avoda is not strong enough to impose any such policy on any possible coalition into which it may feel drawn, if the rest of the coalition disapproves of it. And it is doubtful whether the fact that over 69,000 electors have voted "activist" is enough to make those who prefer the diplomatic to the military approach change their minds. Much more to the point than Ahdut Avoda's activism is the probable activism of Mr. Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister, who could point to the apparent activist vote in the general elections as his mandate.

**T**he apparent activist vote could be shown to consist not only of the votes of Ahdut Avoda but also of those given to Herut, together providing the impressive total of 176,665 votes or 20.7 per cent of the total number of votes cast. There is, of course, no reason on earth why the one voter in five should get his way in a matter of such seriousness if the other four object. It cannot be said, however, that the other four do object; although there is good reason for supposing that, if there is the slightest chance of bringing about border relaxation and peaceful conditions in the frontier areas by other means than violence, a majority of Israelis would like to see those other means exploited to the limit. It is not improbable that the clever campaigners of Herut realized this. At any rate, and laughable as it may seem to those who know the record of Herut and were able to read between the lines of the party's election manifesto, Herut alone put itself before the electors as a peace party.

It was, of course, peace with a difference. Mr. Beigin's peace plan was of the "either-or" variety. He touched the raw nerves of parents whose sons and daughters were in the army and whose lives were endangered, first by the grenade or planted mine of the Arab, then by reprisal action, and thirdly by counter-re-

prisal. Mr. Beigin would do away with this constant and useless blood-letting and, instead, by some means unrevealed, compel the Powers to "unify" Palestine as they are trying to unify Germany and Korea, after which peace with the Arabs would come overnight. On the way to this remarkable dispensation, it might be necessary to liquidate the Gaza pocket and so make things easier for everyone, including the Egyptians.

All this talk of unifying Palestine as a prelude to Israel-Arab peace, and of liquidating the Gaza pocket for the benefit of everyone, may sound like so much drivel to those who know the situation as it really is and what the prospects of a workable peace in this area really are. But to scores of thousands of new immigrants, most of them from Oriental countries, it made sense—more sense than the day-to-day alarms on the border, the reprisals that accomplished little, and another series of rebukes from Washington, London and the U.N.

It is doubtful, therefore, whether Herut's 107,190 votes should in fact be added to the activist bloc; although there is no doubt at all that Herut's 15 Knesset members represent the nearest thing to a war party in the Knesset.

Taken as a whole, it is not at all a bad Knesset that will reassemble after the High Holidays: not even a badly balanced Knesset. It is truly representative of the nation, if not of broad national interests. Mr. Ben-Gurion, if he succeeds in forming his big, national coalition, may be able to shake it into unity and press it into cohesion. In any event, it has work to do that cannot be delayed, and electoral warnings to heed that cannot be evaded. It expresses a steadily developing and consolidating Democracy within which the most exciting experiment in modern statehood has proved itself equal to its promise. Whether the Third Knesset itself will be equal to the promises it gave is a matter which no one in his senses would try to foretell.

# The Wife Killer

## A Folk Tale

By I. BASHEVIS SINGER

I am from Turbin, and there we had a Wife Killer. Pelte was his name, Pelte the Wife Killer. He had four wives and, may it not be held against him, he sent them all off to the other side. What women saw in him, I don't know. He was a little man, thickset, gray, with a scraggly beard and bulging bloodshot eyes. Merely to look at him was frightful. And as for his stinginess—you never saw anything like it. Summer and winter he went about in the same padded kaftan and rawhide boots. Yet he was rich. He had a sizeable brick house, a storeroom full of grain and town lots. He had an oak chest which I remember to this day. It was covered with leather and bound with copper hoops, for protection in case of fire. To keep it safe from thieves, he had it nailed to the floor. It was said that he kept a fortune in it. All the same, I cannot understand how a woman could go to the bridal canopy with such a man. The first two wives at least had the excuse that they came from poor homes. The first one, poor soul (may you live long), was an orphan, and he took her just as she was, without any dowry. The second one, on the other hand (may she rest in peace), was a widow without a cent to her name. She didn't have even an undershirt, if you'll pardon the expression. Today people talk of love. They think that once upon a time men were angels. Nonsense. Clumsy creature that he was, he fell head over heels in love with her, so that all Turbin snickered. He was already a man in his forties and she was a mere child, eighteen years or even less. In short, kind souls intervened, relatives took a hand in the matter and things came to a head.

Right after the wedding the young wife began to complain that he

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I. Bashevis Singer, one of the outstanding writers in Yiddish today, was born in Poland in 1904 and came to the United States in 1935. He is the author of "The Family Moskat" and "Satan in Goray." His stories have been published in many periodicals in this country and abroad. Much of his work has been translated.

wasn't acting right. Strange tales were told, may God not punish me for my words. He was spiteful all the time. Before he went to pray in the morning, she would ask him: "What do you want for lunch? Soup or borscht?" "Soup," he might say. So she'd make him soup. He'd return later and complain: "Didn't I tell you to make borscht?" She'd argue: "You said yourself that you wanted soup." And he would say, "So now I am a liar!" And before you could turn around he was already in a rage, and would grab a slice of bread and a head of garlic, and run back to the synagogue to eat there. She would run after him and shout: "I'll cook you a borscht! Don't shame me before people!" But he wouldn't even look back. In the synagogue young men sat studying. "What happened that you eat here?" they would ask him. "My wife chased me out," he would say. To make a long story short, he drove her to the grave with his tantrums. When people advised her to divorce him, he threatened to run off and abandon her. Once he did run away and was caught on the Yanov road, near the turnpike. The woman saw that she was lost, so she simply lay down in bed and died. "I am dying because of him," she said, "may it not be held against him." The entire town was aroused. Some butchers and young bloods wanted to teach him a lesson, because she was of their class, but the community would not allow it — after all, he was a well-to-do man. The dead are buried, as people say, and what the earth swallows is soon forgotten.

Some years passed and he didn't remarry. Perhaps he didn't want to, perhaps there was no suitable opportunity; anyway, he remained a widower. Women gloated over this. He became even stingier than before and so unkempt that it was positively disgusting. He ate a bit of meat only on Saturday: scraps or derma. All week he ate dry food. He baked his own bread of corn and bran. He didn't buy wood. Instead, he went out at night with a sack, to pick up the chips near the bakery. He had two deep pockets and whatever he saw, he put into them; bones, bark, string, shards. He hid all these things in his attic. He piled heaps of stuff as high as the roof. "Every little thing comes in handy," he used to say. He was a scholar into the bargain, and could quote Scripture on every occasion, though as a rule he talked little.

Everybody thought he would remain alone the rest of his life. Suddenly the terrible news spread that he was engaged to Reb Falik's Finkl. How should I describe Finkl to you! She was the most beautiful woman in town, and of the very best family. Her father, Reb Falik, was a magnate. It was said that he bound his books in silk. Whenever a bride was led to the

*mikveh*, the musicians would stop before his windows and play a tune. Finkl was his only child. There had been seven, and she alone survived. Reb Falik married her off to a rich young man from Brod, one in a million, learned and wise, a real aristocrat. I saw him only once as he went by — with curly *peios* and a flowered kaftan and fine shoes and white socks. Blood and milk. But it was fated otherwise. Right after the Seven Blessings he collapsed. Zishe the healer was called and he put leeches on him and bled him, but what can you do against fate? Reb Falik rushed a carriage to Lublin to bring a doctor, but Lublin is far, and before you knew it, it was all over with him. The entire town wept, as on Yom Kippur at Kol Nidre. The old rabbi, may he rest in peace, delivered the eulogy. I am only a sinful woman and I don't know much of learned matters, but I remember to this day what the rabbi said. Everybody memorized the eulogy. "He ordered black and got white . . ." the rabbi began. In the *Gemorra* this is about a man ordering pigeons, but the rabbi, peace be on him, made it mean wedding garments and burial shrouds. Even enemies mourned. We girls soaked our pillows at night. Finkl, delicate pampered Finkl, lost her speech in her great grief. Her mother was no longer living and Reb Falik, too, didn't survive long. Finkl inherited all his wealth, but what use was money? She refused to hear of anyone.

Suddenly we heard that Finkl was going to marry Pelte. The news came on a wintry Thursday evening, and a chill went through everyone. "The man is of the devil!" my mother cried out. "Such a one should be ridden out of town." We youngsters were petrified. I used to sleep by myself but that night I crawled into bed with my sister. I was in a fever. Later we learned that the match had been arranged by a man who was a bit of this and a bit of that and a general nuisance. It was said that he had borrowed a *Gemorra* from Pelte and found a hundred-ruble note among its pages. Pelte had a habit of hiding paper money in books. What one thing had to do with the other I didn't know, I was still a child then. But what difference does it make? Finkl consented. When God wants to punish someone, He deprives him of reason. People ran to her, they tore their hair trying to dissuade her, but she wouldn't change her mind. The wedding was on the Sabbath after Shevuoth. The canopy was set up before the synagogue, as is the custom when a virgin gets married, but it seemed to all of us that we were attending a funeral. I was in one of the two rows of girls who stand holding candles in their hands. It was a summer evening and the air was still, but when the groom was led past, the flames began to flicker. I shook with fear. The fiddles started to play a wedding tune, but it was a wail,



not music that they made. The bass viol mourned. I wouldn't wish anyone ever to hear the like. To tell you the truth, I'd rather not go on with the story. It might give you nightmares, and I myself don't feel up to it. What? You do want to hear more. Very well. You will have to take me home. Tonight I won't walk home alone.

## II

Where was I? Yes, Finkl got married. She looked more like a corpse than a bride. The bridesmaids had to support her. Who knows? Maybe she had changed her mind. But was it her fault? It was all from Above. I once heard of a bride who ran away from under the canopy. But not Finkl. She would rather be burned alive than humiliate anyone.

Need I tell you how it all ended? Can't you guess yourselves? May all the enemies of Israel come to such an end. I must say that this time he didn't pull his usual tricks. On the contrary, he tried to comfort her. But he gave off a black melancholy. She tried to lose herself in household duties. And young women came to visit her. There was a constant going back and forth, as with a woman in confinement. They told stories, they knitted, they sewed and asked riddles, anything to distract Finkl. Some even began to hint that perhaps it wasn't such an impossible match. He was rich, and a scholar too. Mightn't he become human living with her? It was reckoned that Finkl would become pregnant and have a baby, and get used to her lot. Aren't there many unsuitable marriages in the world! But it wasn't fated that way. Finkl miscarried and had a hemorrhage. They had to bring a doctor from Zamoscz. He advised her to keep herself occupied. She did not become pregnant again, and then her troubles began. He tormented her, everybody knew that. But when she was asked: "What is he doing to you?" she would only say, "Nothing." "If he does nothing to you, why do you have such brown and blue rings around your eyes? And why do you go about like a lost soul?" But she would only say: "I don't know why myself."

How long did this go on? Longer than anyone expected. We all thought she wouldn't last more than a year, but she suffered for three and a half years. She faded like a light. Relatives tried to send her to the hot baths, but she refused to go. Things reached such a pass that people began to pray for her end. One mustn't say it, but death is preferable to such a life. She, too, cursed herself. Before she died, she sent for the rabbi to have him write her will. She probably wanted to leave her wealth for charitable purposes. What else? Leave it to her murderer? But again fate intervened. Some girl suddenly cried "Fire!" and everyone ran to look after his own things.

It turned out that there had been no fire. "Why did you cry 'fire'?" the girl was asked. And she explained that it wasn't she who had shouted, but that something inside her had cried out. Meanwhile Finkl died, and Pelte inherited her property. Now he was the richest man in town, but he haggled over the cost of the grave till he got it for half-price.

Until then he hadn't been called Wife Killer. A man is twice widowed — such things happen. But after this he was always called Pelte the Wife Killer. *Cheder* boys pointed at him: "Here comes the Wife Killer." After the Seven Days of Mourning, the rabbi sent for him. "Reb Pelte," he said, "you are now the richest man in Turbin. Half the stores in the market place belong to you. With God's help you have become great. It is time you changed your ways. How long will you live apart from everyone else?" But no words impressed him. Talk of one thing to him, and he answers something entirely different; or he bites his lips and says nothing — you might as well talk to the wall. When the rabbi saw that it was a waste of time, he let him go.

For a time he was silent. He began to bake his own bread again and to collect chips and cones and dung for fuel. He was shunned like the plague. He seldom came to the synagogue. Everybody was glad not to see him. On Thursdays he went around with his book to collect debts or interest. He had everything written down and never forgot a thing. If a storekeeper said that he hadn't the money to pay him and asked him to come some other time, he wouldn't go but stayed right there, staring with his bulging eyes, till the storekeeper got tired of it and gave him his last cent. The rest of the week he hid away somewhere in his kitchen. At least ten years passed this way, perhaps eleven; I don't remember any more. He must have been in his late fifties, or perhaps in his sixties. Nobody tried to arrange a match for him.

And then something happened, and this is what I want to tell you about. As I live, one could write a book about it; but I will make it short. In Turbin there lived a woman who was called Zlateh the Bitch. Some called her Zlateh the Cossack. From her nicknames you can guess for yourselves what sort of a person she was. It is not right to gossip about the dead, but the truth must be told — she was the lowest and meanest sort. She was a fish-wife and her husband had been a fisherman. It's shameful to tell what she did in her youth. She was a slut — everyone knew that. She had a bastard somewhere. Her husband used to work in the poorhouse. There he beat and robbed the sick. How he suddenly got to be a fisherman I don't know, but that makes no difference. Fridays they used to stand in the market place with a basket of fish and curse everyone, whether they bought or not. Curses

tumbled from her mouth as from a torn sack. If someone complained that she cheated on the weight, she would grab a fish by the tail and strike out. She tore the wig from the head of more than one woman. Once she was accused of stealing, so she went to the rabbi and falsely swore before black candles and the board on which the dead are washed that she was innocent. Her husband was named Eber, a strange name; he came from far off in Poland. He died and she became a widow. She was so wicked that all through the funeral she howled: "Eber, don't forget to take along all troubles." After the Seven Days of Mourning, she again sold fish in the market place. Since she was a shrew and abused everyone, people taunted her. One woman said to her: "Aren't you going to remarry, Zlateh?" And she answered: "Why not? I'm still a tasty dish." Yet she was already an old hag. "Whom will you marry, Zlateh?" people asked her, and she thought a moment and said: "Pelte."

The women thought she was joking and they laughed. But it was no joke, as you will soon hear.

### III

One woman said to her: "But he is a Wife Killer!" And Zlateh answered: "If he is a Wife Killer, I am a worse Husband Killer. Eber wasn't my first husband." Who could tell how many she had before him? She wasn't a native of Turbin — the devil brought her from somewhere on the other side of the Vistula. Nobody paid any attention to what she said, but hardly a week passed before everybody heard that Zlateh hadn't been talking at random. Nobody knew whether she sent a matchmaker or arranged the match herself — but the marriage was going through. The whole town laughed — a fitting pair, falsehood and wickedness. Everybody said the same: "If Finkl were alive and saw who was inheriting her place, she would die of grief." Tailors' apprentices and seamstresses at once began to wager who would outlast whom. The apprentices said that nobody was a match for Pelte the Wife Killer, and the seamstresses argued that Zlateh was younger by some years and that not even Pelte had a chance once she opened her mouth. Anyway, the wedding took place. I wasn't there. You know that when a widower takes a widow, there's little fuss. But others who were there had lots of fun. The bride was all decked out. On Saturday she came to the women's gallery in the synagogue wearing a hat with a feather. She couldn't read. That Saturday I happened to take a new bride to the synagogue, and Zlateh stood right near me. She took Finkl's seat. She talked and jabbered all the time so that I didn't know what to do with myself for

shame. And do you know what she said? She abused her husband. "He won't last long with me around," she said; just like that. A bitch — that she was.

For some time nobody talked about them. After all, a whole town can't always bother with such scum. Then suddenly there was an outcry again. Zlateh had hired a maid, a little woman who had been abandoned by her husband. The maid started telling horrible stories. Pelte and Zlateh were at war — not just they, that is, but their stars. All sorts of things happened. Once Zlateh stood in the middle of the room and the chandelier fell down; it missed her by an inch. "The Wife Killer is at his tricks again," she said. "I'll show him something." The next day Pelte was walking in the market place; he slipped and fell into a ditch and nearly broke his neck. Every day something new happened. One time the soot in the chimney caught fire and the entire house almost burned down; another time the cornice of the wardrobe fell and barely missed Pelte's skull. Everybody could see plainly that one or the other would have to go. It is written somewhere that every man is followed by devils — a thousand on the left and ten thousand on the right. We had a *melamed* in town, a certain Reb Itche the Slaughtered — that's what he was called — a very fine man who knew all about "those" matters. He said that this was a case of war between "them." At first things were fairly quiet; that is, people talked, but the unfortunate couple didn't say a thing. But in the end, Zlateh came running to the rabbi all atremble. "Rabbi," she shouted, "I can't stand it any more. Just think of it: I prepared dough in a trough and covered it with a pillow. I wanted to get up early to bake bread. In the middle of the night I see — the dough is on my bed. It's his work, Rabbi. He's made up his mind to finish me off." At that time Reb Eisele Teumim, a true saint, was rabbi in the town. He couldn't believe his own ears. "Why should a man play such tricks?" he asked. "Why? You tell me why!" she answered. "Rabbi, send for him, let him tell it himself." The *shames* was sent and he brought Pelte. Naturally, he denied everything. "She is giving me a bad name," he cried. "She wants to get rid of me and get my money. She cast a spell to make water collect in the cellar. I went down there to get a piece of rope and was nearly drowned. Besides, she brought on a plague of mice." Pelte declared on oath that at night Zlateh whistled in bed, and that as soon as she started whistling there was a squeaking and a rushing of mice from all the holes. He pointed to a scar over his eyebrow and said that a mouse had bitten him there. When the rabbi realized whom he had to deal with, he said: "Take my advice and get divorced. It will be better for both of you." "The rabbi is right," Zlateh said. "I am willing, this very



minute, but let him give me a settlement of half the property." "I won't give you the price of a pinch of snuff!" Pelte shouted. "What's more, you will pay me a fine." He grabbed his cane and wanted to strike her. He was held back with difficulty. When the rabbi saw that he would get nowhere in this case, he said: "Go your ways and leave me to my studies." So they went away.

From that time on the town had no rest. It was frightening to pass by their house. The shutters were always closed, even in the day time. Zlateh stopped selling fish, and all they did was fight. Zlateh was a giant of a woman. She used to go to the landowners' ponds and help spread the nets. She would get up in the middle of the night in winter, and in the worst frosts she never used a fire-pot. "The devil won't take me," she'd say. "I'm never cold." And now she suddenly aged. Her face blackened and was wrinkled like that of a woman of seventy. She started coming to strangers' houses to ask for advice. Once she came to my mother, peace be on her, and begged to be allowed to stay overnight. My mother looked at her as one demented. "What happened?" she asked. "I'm afraid of him," Zlateh said. "He wants to get rid of me. He makes winds in the house." She said that though the windows were sealed outside with clay and inside with straw, strong winds blew in her bedroom. She also swore that her bed would rise beneath her, and that Pelte spent half the nights in the outhouse, if you'll pardon the expression. "What does he do there so long?" my mother asked. "He has a mistress there," Zlateh said. I happened to be in the alcove and heard all this. Pelte must have had dealings with the Unclean Ones. My mother shuddered. "Listen to me, Zlateh," she said, "give him the 'dozen lines' and run for your life. If they were to give me my weight in gold, I wouldn't live under the same roof with anyone like that." But a Cossack never changes. "He won't get rid of me just like that," Zlateh said. "Let him give me a settlement." In the end, my mother made up a bed for her on the bench. We didn't shut an eye that night. Before dawn she got up and left. Mother couldn't fall asleep again and lit a taper in the kitchen. "You know," she said to me, "I have a feeling that she won't get out of his hands alive. Well, it won't be a big loss." But Zlateh wasn't Finkl. She didn't give up so easily, as you will soon hear.

#### IV

**W**hat did she do? I don't know. People told all sorts of stories, but you can't believe everything. We had an old peasant woman in town, Cune-

gunde. She must have been a hundred years old, maybe older. Everybody knew that she was a witch. Her whole face was covered with warts and she walked almost on all fours. Her hut was at the end of town, on the sand, and it was full of all kinds of animals: rabbits and guinea pigs, and cats, and dogs, and all kinds of vermin. Birds flew in and out of the windows. The place stank. But Zlateh became a frequent visitor and spent whole days there. The woman knew how to pour wax. If a peasant was sick, he would come to her and she'd pour molten wax which formed all sorts of strange figures and showed what the sickness came from — though it did little good.

As I was saying, people in town said that this Cunegunde taught Zlateh a charm. Anyway, Pelte became a changed man, soft as butter. She wanted him to transfer the house to her name, so he hired a team of horses and went to town to register the transfer. Then she started meddling in his stores. Now it was she who went about on Thursdays with the interest and rent book. She asked for increases right away. The storekeepers cried that they were losing their shirts, so she said: "In that case you can go begging." A meeting was held and Pelte was called. He was so weak that he could barely walk. He was completely deaf. "There is nothing I can do," he said. "Everything belongs to her. If she wants to, she can drive me out of the house." She would have, too, but he hadn't transferred everything to her yet. He was still bargaining with her. Neighbors said that she was starving him. He used to go into houses and beg for a piece of bread. His hands shook. Everybody saw that Zlateh was having her way. Some were glad — he was being punished for Finkl. Others argued that Zlateh would ruin the town. It's not a small matter when so much property gets into the hands of such a beast. She began to build and to dig. She brought craftsmen from Yanov and they started measuring the streets. She put on a wig, with silver combs, and she carried a purse and a parasol, like a real aristocrat. She burst into homes early in the morning, before the beds were made, and she pounded on tables and shouted: "I'll throw you out with your junk. I'll have you locked up in the Yanov jail! I'll make beggars out of you!" Poor people tried to fawn on her, but she wouldn't even listen. Then people realized that it isn't wise to wish for a new king.

One afternoon the door of the poorhouse opened and Pelte came in, dressed like a beggar. The man in charge of the poorhouse turned pale as a ghost. "Reb Pelte," he exclaimed, "what are you doing here?" "I came to stay here," Pelte answered. "My wife has thrown me out." To make a long story short, Pelte had transferred all his possessions to Zlateh, everything, down to the last thread, and then she chased him out. "But how does one do

a thing like that?" he was asked. "Don't even ask," he answered. "She fixed me! I barely came out alive." The poorhouse was in an uproar. Some cursed Pelte. "As if the rich don't have enough as it is — now they come to eat the food of the poor," they cried. Others pretended sympathy. In short, Pelte was given a bundle of straw to spread in the corner, and he lay down. The whole town came running to see the sight. I, too, was curious and ran to see. He sat on the floor like a mourner and stared at everybody with his bulging eyes. People asked him: "Why do you sit here, Reb Pelte, what happened to all your power?" At first he didn't answer at all, as if they weren't talking to him, and later he said: "She isn't finished with me yet." "What will you do to her?" the beggars jeered. They made a laughing-stock of him. But don't jump at conclusions. You know the old saying: He laughs best who laughs last.

For several weeks Zlateh was a regular demon. She turned the whole town upside down. Right in the middle of the market place, near the stores, she had a pit dug and hired men to mix lime. Logs were brought and heaps of brick were piled up so that no one could pass. Roofs were torn down and a notary came from Yanov to make a list of all her tenants' belongings. Zlateh bought a carriage and a team of fiery horses and she went riding every afternoon. She started wearing shoes with pointed tips and let her hair grow. She also began to pal around with the *goyim* of the Christian streets. She bought two vicious dogs, regular killers, so that it was dangerous to pass by her house. She stopped selling fish. What did she need it for? But out of habit, she had to have fish around, so she filled bathtubs in her house and stocked them with carp and pike. She even kept a big tub full of *treif* fish, and lobsters and frogs and eels. It was rumored in town that she would become an apostate any day. Some said that on *Pesach* the priest had come to her house to sprinkle it with holy water. People feared that she might inform on the community — someone like that is capable of anything.

Suddenly, she came running to the rabbi. "Rabbi," she said, "send for Pelte. I want a divorce." "What do you want a divorce for?" the rabbi asked her. "Do you want to remarry?" "I don't know," she said. "Maybe yes and maybe no. But I don't want to be the wife of a Wife Killer. I'm willing to compensate him with something." The rabbi sent for Pelte and he came crawling. Everybody in town stood outside the rabbi's house. Poor Pelte, he consented to everything. His hands shook as in a fever. Reb Moishe the scribe sat down to write out the divorce. I remember him as if this hap-

pened yesterday. He was a small man and had a tic. He ruled the paper with his penknife, then he wiped the goose quill on his skull cap. The witnesses were instructed how to sign the divorce. My husband, peace be on him, was one of the witnesses because he wrote a good hand. Zlateh sat comfortably on a chair and sucked candy. And, yes, I forgot to mention it, she put down two hundred rubles. Pelte recognized them — he had had a habit of marking his money. The rabbi ordered silence, but Zlateh boasted to the women that she was considering marrying a “possessor” but that “as long as the Wife Killer is my husband, I am not sure of staying alive.” When she said this she laughed so that everybody outside heard her.

When everything was ready, the rabbi began questioning the couple. I still remember his words. “Hear me, Paltiel, son of Schneour Zalman” — that was the name by which Pelte was called up to the reading of the Torah — “do you want to divorce your wife?” He said something more, from the *Gemorra*, but I can’t say it as he did. “Say ‘yes’,” he ordered Pelte. “Say ‘yes’ once, not twice.” Pelte said “yes.” We could hardly hear him. “Hear me, Zlateh Golde, daughter of Yehuda Treitel, do you want to divorce your husband, Paltiel?” “Yes!” Zlateh shouted, and as she said this she swayed and fell to the floor in a faint. I saw this myself, and I tell you the truth: I felt my brain bursting in my head. I thought I’d collapse too. There was a great outcry and commotion. Everybody rushed to revive her. They poured water on her and stuck pins into her and rubbed her with vinegar and pulled her hair. Azriel the healer came running and cupped her then and there. She still breathed, but it wasn’t the same Zlateh. May God preserve us. Her mouth was twisted to one side and the spittle ran out of it; her eyes were rolled up and her nose was white, like that of a corpse. The women who stood near, heard her mumble: “The Wife Killer! He overcame me!” These were her last words.

At the funeral there was almost a riot. Now Pelte was again on his high horse. Beside his own property he now also had her wealth. Her jewelry alone was worth a fortune. The burial society wanted a big sum, but Pelte wouldn’t budge. They shouted, they warned, they abused him. They threatened him with excommunication. Might as well talk to the wall! “I won’t give a penny, let her rot,” he said. They would have left her lying around, too, but it was summertime and there was a heat wave just then, and people feared an epidemic. In short, some women performed the rites — what other choice was there? The pall-bearers refused to carry her, so a wagon was hired. She was buried right near the fence, among the stillbirths. All the same, Pelte said *kaddish* after her — this he did.



From then on the Wife Killer remained alone. People were so afraid of him, they avoided passing by his house. Mothers of pregnant young women did not allow his name to be mentioned, unless they first put on two aprons. *Cheder* boys fingered their fringes before pronouncing his name. And nothing came of all the construction and remodelling. The bricks were carried off, the lime was stolen. The carriage and its team of horses disappeared — he must have sold them. The water in the bathtubs dried up and the fish died. There was a cage with a parrot in the house. It squawked, "I'm hungry" — it could talk Yiddish — until at last it starved to death. Pelte had the shutters nailed tight and never opened them again. He didn't even go out to collect the pennies from the storekeepers. All day he lay on his bench and snored, or simply dozed. At night he'd go out to collect chips. Once each week, they sent him two loaves of bread from the bakery, and the baker's wife would buy him some onions, garlic, radishes and, on occasion, a piece of dry cheese. He never ate meat. He never came to the synagogue on Saturdays. There was no broom in his house and the dirt gathered in heaps. Mice ran about even during the day and spider webs hung from the rafters. The roof leaked and wasn't repaired. The walls rotted and caved in. Every few weeks it was rumored that things were not well with the Wife Killer, that he was sick, or dying. The burial society rubbed its hands in anticipation. But nothing happened. He outlived everyone. He lived so long that people in Turbin began to hint that he might live forever. Why not? Maybe he had some special kind of blessing, or the Angel of Death forgot him. Anything can happen.

Rest assured that he was not forgotten by the Angel of Death. But when that happened I was no longer in Turbin. He must have been a hundred years old, maybe older. After the funeral his entire house was turned upside down, but nothing of value was found. The chests had rotted away. The gold and silver was gone. The money and notes turned to dust the minute a breeze touched them. All the digging in the heaps of rubbish was wasted. The Wife Killer had outlived everything: his wives, his enemies, his money, his property, his generation. All that was left after him — may God forgive me for saying so — was a heap of dust.

—*Translated from the Yiddish by*  
SHLOMO KATZ.

Jewish education and the Hebrew School are often discussed in the press and at conferences. The Hebrew teacher, the decisive factor in Jewish education, is often overlooked. This account of why one Hebrew teacher left the profession may explain why many others also leave it. THEODORE FRANKEL was born in Berlin in 1922 and came to the United States in 1939. He studied at Yeshiva and at Columbia. His work has appeared in numerous periodicals.

# I Was a Hebrew Teacher

By THEODORE FRANKEL

**I**n the years since I stopped being a Hebrew teacher I have often wondered why I became one in the first place. I dare say that, like most of my fellows, I was motivated in the choice of my profession partly by idealism and partly by inertia protected by ignorance. In my own case, though, the decision was also colored by gratitude, for my coming to America in 1939 was made possible when Yeshiva University, at the instance of a friendly rabbi, accepted me as a student. I was then seventeen years old. I had left my parents behind me in Germany and had no family in this country. For the next four years the authorities at Yeshiva, having saved my life, also fed, clothed, housed and instructed me gratis.

Life at Yeshiva was, and is, quite unique. The day began with communal services for all who lived at the dormitory. After services we had breakfast in the communal dining room and then went to morning classes. I had been placed in the Hebrew Teachers' Institute rather than in the Rabbinical Seminary, and from nine to one every morning studied the prescribed courses. The language of instruction was Hebrew. After lunch I attended the college where a course in liberal arts was taught in English. My

evenings were devoted to homework. Since my knowledge of English was defective, I had to work hard and there were times when I did not set foot outside Yeshiva for weeks on end, particularly during the winter. At the end of four years I could give quite a respectable account of myself. I spoke Hebrew fluently, had read through Graetz's six-volume history of the Jews three times, had studied Scriptures from cover to cover with at least four commentaries, had read every major Hebrew writer and a good many of the minor ones, and had gotten around even to some of the Yiddish authors, in Hebrew translation, of course. I could study a *blatt* Gemorra without assistance, though not without difficulty, and I had faithfully studied *mishnaioth*, laws and customs, grammar, pedagogy and whatever else the authorities considered necessary for our preparation as Hebrew teachers. In addition, I had finished my college education.

I now left Yeshiva and decided to face life as a Hebrew teacher. I presented myself to Dr. Pinchos Churgin who was then the head of the Hebrew Teachers' Institute and one of the kindest men I have ever met. He received me in his cluttered office, talked with me for a while, smiled, gave me the address of a rabbi, shook

my hand, wished me good luck and said in his charming, lilting Ashkenazi pronunciation, "*Shalom, bochur. Al tishkach lishmoir es hashabos.*" (Good bye, don't forget to observe the Sabbath.) I was on my own now and every step was an adventure. But when I try to think back to my first year as a Hebrew teacher I experience an almost complete blank. All I can recall is that the school was located in a poor neighborhood at the northern end of Harlem and that I was paid \$30 a week for thirteen hours of teaching. The year was 1943-44.

**B**y contrast, I remember everything about the second year with perfect clarity. During the last days of the old school year I had visited Dr. Churgin again and he had referred me to a *Shul* in the Bronx. I rode out by bus. My destination proved to be in one of the poorer neighborhoods of the Bronx and though I was used to the littered streets of Manhattan, my heart fell at the sight of the filthy streets, the ragged children, the myriad of shabby little candy stores that looked like fly specks on the soiled facades of grimy tenement houses. I found the synagogue lying somnolently in the heat of the day, looking squat and nondescript, bare even of the distinction of ugliness, its grey stones smeared with the chalk marks of childish games. The doors of the synagogue were slightly ajar and I could hear the murmur of voices. I walked in. The interior of the synagogue was light but cheerless, and arranged according to the strictest orthodox pattern. A bearded man, obviously the rabbi, was delivering a lecture in the Talmud to a group of elderly shopkeepers. The rabbi's voice rose and fell with argument and counter-argument and the thumb of his right hand, rigid in its quest for truth, cleaved the air vigorously.

I sat down in one of the back pews. When the lecture was finished I ap-

proached the rabbi and identified myself. Three of the officers, the rabbi and I made our way upstairs to a second story room which served as a conference room as well as a stockroom. From the beginning, the president took command. He explained to me that the schedule called for four hours of instruction a day, five days a week and that classes, thank God, were large. "What about the salary?" I asked. "That depends upon the *probe*!" he explained. "The *probe*?" I said, "What's that?" It was the president's turn to be astonished. "A *probe*", he said, eyeing me suspiciously, "is a trial lesson." "But," I stammered, "I've never heard of such a thing. After all, I have taught for a year, I have good recommendations, I was an outstanding student." "I don't care", he said, "if you are the Gaon of Wilna, may he rest in peace; in our congregation you must give a *probe*. Otherwise how can we tell what to pay you? By the way how much do you want?" I did some rapid calculation, then I said boldly, "Fifty dollars a week." The president looked at me speechlessly for a moment then he guffawed into my face. "Don't be silly," he said finally, "come to the *probe* next Tuesday and we'll talk business. Give me your word you'll be here." "All right," I said weakly, "but tell me, at least, approximately how much you intend to give me, so I can compare it with other offers." At this point the rabbi intervened. "The boy is right," he said, "it's only fair to give him some kind of estimate." The president turned on the rabbi brusquely. "Look here, Rabbi," he said, "you stick to the Talmud and let me run the *Shul*. After all, I've had plenty of experience hiring help for my butcher shop and I know what I'm doing." At this point I broke in. "I am still teaching at the other school," I said, "how will I get away?" "What's the matter with you, boy?" the president asked. "You're a greenhorn or something? Tell

your rabbi you're sick. But be here, remember, a word is a word."

The following day I called the rabbi in the Bronx and told him that I would not be able to give the *probe*; he seemed to understand. I applied to Dr. Churgin again and this time he sent me to a synagogue in Queens where a young rabbi interviewed me and hired me on the spot. In September, several days before school was to start, I presented myself again to Rabbi Cohen at Congregation *Adath Amuna*, a modern orthodox congregation. (All the names are fictitious.) The synagogue was situated in one of the middle income neighborhoods of Queens, where the streets are lined with identical trees standing in front of identical two-family houses. Small, but well cared for lawns and frequent flowerbeds separated the driveways leading to the two-car garages. The synagogue building itself was a substantial looking squarish box built of red brick with little ornament but stained glass windows and a large Star of David.

The rabbi, a brisk, businesslike man in his early forties received me in his study which was lined with shelves holding folios of the Talmud, the *Shulchan Aruch* and other rabbinic literature as well as popular treatises on psychology and back numbers of several Jewish magazines. He greeted me with the easy, and by no means unpleasant, heartiness of the professional mixer and took me down to see the classrooms which, like those in the other two schools I taught in, were situated in the basement. While we were walking down the stairs, Rabbi Cohen explained the set-up to me. "Our school," he said, "or, as we prefer to call it, our Talmud-Torah, has an enrollment of approximately 130 children, divided according to age and sex into six classes. Their ages vary from 8 to 13 years, when at Bar Mitzvah time, they leave school. Every class meets for one hour every

day, five days a week. We have two teachers, each teaching three classes. The hours are from three to six o'clock in the afternoon, and the younger children have the earlier hours. Our pupils are recruited largely from the children of our members, but there are some outsiders. The fee is \$4 per month."

We had arrived at the bottom of the staircase and entered a small, bare foyer. On our right and left were two enormous doors and the rabbi opened one of them. "This will be your classroom," he said, pushing the door wide open. Beyond, like an enormous cavern, lay the biggest classroom I have ever seen, dim in the sparse light coming from small, barred windows. Though the windows were high up on the wall inside, they were only inches above the ground outside. The rabbi turned on a switch and the room leaped at me out of the darkness. Because it was unusually long and wide, most of the space in the back was empty. The walls were painted a dull olive green. In a number of places the paint was peeling off, revealing an ugly brown layer of old paint. Up front, six rows of school desks, standing five deep, expectantly faced the big blackboard and the teacher's desk and chair. An enormous closet, reaching almost to the high ceiling, stood in one corner. Next to it on the wall was a map of Palestine and next to the map were several lists of names, many of them decorated with stars. There were fingerprints and smudges over all the walls and the desks looked old and dilapidated.

Rabbi Cohen now took out a key and opened the closet. Wooden shelves ran up to the very top and on the shelves were stacks of textbooks, prayerbooks and school supplies. At this point a tall young man came into the room. "Meet Mr. Samuel," the rabbi said. "He has been with us for three years and knows more about this thing than I do. He'll



tell you all you'll need to know. If you ever need any help, feel free to call on me. Now you will have to excuse me, there are a million things waiting for me in the office." He smiled at us and walked out.

Mr. Samuel sat down and for the next hour briefed me on the curriculum, on the text books and on some of the problem children. He also told me that I was to teach one mixed class of beginners, an intermediary boys' class, and a class of Bar Mitzvah boys. As we were parting, Mr. Samuel said to me "You know, I wouldn't take advantage of the rabbi's offer of help too often. He is a busy man and there are so many demands on his time that he must expect us to take care of ourselves."

The following Monday at three o'clock in the afternoon I faced twenty boys and girls aged from eight to ten years, all looking well-nourished, well-dressed and well-scrubbed. I could sense among the children the excitement of a new adventure, heightened in this case by the awareness of being initiated into something mysterious and important. Many of them, I knew, had accompanied their parents to the synagogue on the High Holidays or on the Sabbath and had been hushed into awe by a splendor and a language and a ritual unfamiliar to their everyday lives; and the memory of that awe still carried over to the dark and musty basement room where they now found themselves.

There should have been a school assembly to make the moment memorable for them, to mark for them their entry into the smaller community of the school and the larger of Jewish life. Since they had been denied this necessary ritual, I tried to convey to them in words that by attending Hebrew school they would become part of the Jewish people everywhere and at all times, that they would now enter the most splendid heritage of the ages. But when you are eight years

old, words are no substitute for music and ritual and for that sense of belonging which can come only from being together with others in a circumstance of pomp. So I felt that my words were falling flat and talked with them for a while about their summer vacations and their hobbies, making sure to give each child a chance to speak. Then we turned to our first Hebrew lesson. I distributed the textbooks which I had found in the closet and told the children to open them from right to left, which provoked a good deal of mystified giggling. The textbook employed the older phonetic method of teaching the alphabet and I felt like an old world *melamed* as I stood before the children chanting: B-O, BO; B-A, BA; B-AE, BAE and the children repeated after me in chorus, joyfully and miraculously transsubstantiating the square Assyrian script into the piping sounds of their youthful bleating.

The next class, which met from four to five o'clock, comprised a group of approximately fifteen boys, most of them nine and ten year olds. From the familiar way they entered I could see that Hebrew school held no awe for them. Individually, they seemed to be well behaved and pleasant, but I did not doubt for a minute that as a group they could be formidable. They looked alert both for knowledge and for any hint of weakness which I as a teacher might disclose. Seeing that they were quite sophisticated, I was careful to avoid in my talk to them anything resembling the inspirational, but chatted with them as easily as I could, talking to them about their summer vacations, asking their opinions about Hebrew school and Jewish life, leading them lightly into the direction I had in mind. That was easier than it might sound because children, for all their shrewdness in judging people, are very gullible when it comes to abstract ideas. And since, by and large, they are

eager to please and astonishingly sensitive to what will please, even the brightest among them only too often readily adopt those ideas which will be approved by the grown-ups.

I let the talk last for quite a while, partly because I saw that the boys enjoyed it and partly because it gave me a chance to get to know them. In turn, I was conscious of being watched myself and, at the end, when their attention began to slacken, of being subtly tested: a desk top was closed just a trifle too hard, a giggle was self-consciously prolonged beyond its occasion, an elbow was dug into a neighbor's rib. Would I see it, and if so, what would I do about it? I was careful to let them know that I saw everything and I was quick to be just a shade too strict because I knew that, if I were lax in the beginning, I would soon lose control completely, but if I acquired an early reputation for strictness, I could always let up later.

The bell rang, the second class left and the last class came in pushing and shoving, flopped down into the seats, stretched their legs, chewed gum and discussed, with considerable animation, a disputed play in the softball game they obviously had just been forced to abandon.

Flustered by this naked display of power and disrespect I said, sounding inane to myself, "My name is Mr. Frankel, I am your new teacher," only to hear somebody sing out, "You'll be sorry!" and somebody else saying, amid great and self-satisfied laughter, "What happened to Mr. Beck from last year? Couldn't take it, eh? I told you fellows, he wouldn't be back." I said, feeling that I was getting into it deeper, "Who will tell me why we go to Hebrew school?" and somebody groaned, "Oh God, not that again." Then the leader of the class spoke up. There was no mistaking him; though he was only thirteen years old, he was bigger and heavier than I, and

he sat hunched back in his seat with the self-sufficiency and the truculence which early mark the stupid and the brutal. "Look," he said now, "the only reason why I go to Hebrew (that is what he said: "to Hebrew") is because my old man makes me and I told him, when I get Bar Mitzvah, I quit." "Yea, yea," the others chorused and tried to look tough. "But," I said, "there are other reasons, besides preparing for Bar Mitzvah, why we go to school." There was an outcry of: "Are you kidding?" and "No! No!" and the fat boy said, "Listen, I've been going to this dump for four years and I don't know a damned thing and I sure as hell am not going to learn anything this year. All I know is that my friends, my Christian friends that is, play ball all afternoon and I got to quit in the middle of everything and come here." He was so vexed that he banged the desk with his fist and stamped his foot. The other boys watched me attentively. "Stop your swearing and your banging," I said. Then I made them discard their chewing gum and began the lesson.

The following day classes began in earnest and after a week or so I had developed the routine which I was to follow for the rest of the year. Classes met on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday, and a typical day went somewhat as follows: I arrived at a quarter to three (except on Sunday when we had morning classes from 9 to 12). Promptly at three o'clock I took the roll and the beginners' class began. The children opened the primers and I read aloud a line in the manner I have described above and the children repeated it after me in chorus. In this fashion we finished one page. Then I called on the children to read individually and corrected their mistakes. When I was satisfied that they had grasped the new lesson and that they remembered the previous ones, I wrote

the new lesson on the blackboard and made the class copy into their notebooks while I went around and corrected them. I might say here that at the end of the year the children knew the alphabet and could read simple sentences with ease.

Reading and writing took about forty minutes. What was left of the hour we would spend on Jewish history and Jewish law. During this first year we covered the period from the creation of the world to the death of Moses, and since the time allotted to reading and writing was unavoidably dull, I tried to vary the second part as much as I could.

We also devoted a good deal of our time, especially on Sundays, to the discussion of the holidays and to learning the relevant blessings and rites, such as the Four Questions for Passover and the like. Our particular concern was preparation for the Sabbath services. This part of the instruction was rather pleasant and I often wished that I could make it even more interesting by applying some of the modern educational techniques which I had learned at the Hebrew Teachers' Institute. But that, of course, was out of the question: there was neither crayon nor paper, not to speak of a movie projector and other audio-visual extravagances. Even games were out because they were too noisy and because it seemed to the rabbi that the children did not really "learn" anything this way. So I had to fall back on the ancient routines which were boring and would soon deaden the children's interest, but which had the virtue of being orderly and quiet.

All in all, this was the most satisfying class I had. Their scholastic advances seemed dramatic to the children and they were eager to learn and pleasant to be with. There was a warmth in our relationship which I never quite achieved with the other classes and which was symbolized for me by the red rose which one of my girl students brought me from

her mother's garden every Sunday, as long as their season lasted. I took the rose home, put it into a glass of water and placed it on the window sill. There it stood until the following week.

The second class began with what the rabbi euphuistically called "channeled reading," but which was, in fact, the same reading routine practiced on the more important prayers. Of course, no attempt could be made to explain the meaning of these prayers except in the most general terms. The result was that the boys in my class were confronted every day of their school life by endlessly crawling lines of foreign print which they were asked to transmute at ever increasing speeds into sounds unintelligible to them. Their task was not merely monotonous, it was tricky as well, because the simple, lapidary three-letter words which they had encountered in their first year primer had in no way prepared them for such complex semantic edifices as *b'shiv-t-cho oo'v'koo-mae-cho* over which the shifting winds of pronunciation blow first one way and then another.

However, the ingenuity of Hebrew teachers had contrived to turn the drudgery into spine-tingling excitement. Given the difficulty and the intrinsic monotony of the exercise, it was necessary only to inject the elements of time and competition to arrive at that great harnesser of human energy: sport. Yes, it was by converting the reading of the prayers into a sport that the obstacles of the Hebrew language became hurdles over which the children threw themselves daily with all the vigor of their competitive young hearts, to be rewarded by me with paper stars of gold, silver, and bronze.

I had learned this method from my older colleague and pursuant to his instructions had bought a stop watch. At the beginning of each period I appoint-

ed one boy keeper of the watch and another checker and while each student read his lines, the keeper of the watch clocked his time and the checker, assisted by the rest of the class, counted the number of his mistakes. In the end, the performance was rated by me according to a complicated formula which took into account both speed and flawlessness.

This game, however disturbing to the fastidious, had its desired results and at the end of the year the boys could read the principal prayers, the *Shema* and the *Shmoneh Esreh* with fair speed and could, to that extent, participate in the children's Sabbath services. Given several more years of the same training, they would be able to recite all of the prayers as quickly, and with as little understanding, as their parents and would be able to be as good members of the community as those who had caused their present mode of training.

The reading exercise took about half an hour and was followed by fifteen to twenty minutes of study in the Hebrew textbook which was preparatory to the study of the Bible. Usually the class went through one page, the boys reading two or three short sentences at a time, translating them and, when we were done with the page, copying them into their notebooks while I went around correcting their mistakes. In history, the second class covered the period from Joshua to the Kings. They also learned in greater detail the laws of the Sabbath and the more frequently used of the daily blessings, though most of the children, I am certain, were never called on to make even the blessing over bread. Before major holidays the history and the meaning of the holiday were covered intensively. Thus, for Passover every child was required to know by heart the Four Questions. Though my relationship with this class never quite attained the warmth of feeling that obtained between me and

the first class, it was pleasant enough. The children were not quite as eager, but their progress was evident and some of the brighter boys acquired a facility in reading, a growing Hebrew vocabulary and an interest for Jewish history and customs that made me feel pleased with them and with myself.

Discipline in the first two classes was a very minor problem. There were, to be sure, bad days, especially toward the end of the school year when the weather turned warm. However, considering the fare I had to place before them day in and day out, these days occurred with gratifying infrequency.

It was a different story, though, with my last class. To begin with, these boys were just entering their puberty and this age, as any teacher can testify, is a difficult one. In the second place, this particular class was beset with what one might call institutional difficulties. In theory, boys their age should have attended Talmud Torah for four years, but in practice many children have spent far less time in Hebrew school, some because of sickness, others because of change of residence, and quite a number because their parents, not wanting to overburden their children, did not register them early enough. In addition, there is always a certain percentage of students who cannot keep up with their classmates because they are either stupid or emotionally disturbed. Since everybody must graduate during the year of his Bar Mitzvah, it is the custom in many schools to lump the insufficiently trained, the retarded, and the troubled into one class and foist them on the newest teacher.

Finally, this is the time when the school's sins of omission and commission catch up with it, when the children have grown tired of their monotonous fare and when they conclude that what they have spent most of their time on, has remained and will remain meaningless. Thus my boys were triply resentful: because



of their age, their status in school, and the emptiness of all the afternoons stretching before them for the seeming eternity of a whole year.

**O**n paper their curriculum, as Mr. Samuel and I had outlined it, had looked easy enough, half an hour a day reading from the prayerbook, and the rest of the time spent on translating from the Bible or preparing for the holidays, or on learning history. But, in practice, matters were far different. Even now, after all these years, I still can feel the anxiety which began to well up in me when I dismissed the second class and waited for the last class to enter because I knew that from the time the boys came in, their faces set in stubborn lines of refusal, to the time when they left, not troubling to hide their relief, I would be engaged in one continuous struggle with them. It was not that they were malicious or even exceptionally boisterous (except for the problem children), it was just that they did not want to learn and that nothing I could say or do could change their minds. I could neither interest nor intimidate them and neither pedagogic procedures nor tricks helped. They had seen all the tricks and caught on to them long ago. Now all they wanted was to be Bar Mitzvah and to forget all about Hebrew school. I, on the other hand, was obliged to insist that they read the prayers and translate from the Bible; it was my duty to keep after them and see to it that they did things which, for a long time, they had found useless and uninteresting. In short, I became a pest to them and, in the end, ridiculous, and there resulted a vicious circle in which their refusal and my insistence fed on each other till we could hardly look one at the other, we were so full of hatred and contempt. Nonetheless, my pupils and I were obligated to remain together in a situation in which I did not have the power to restrain them nor they

the right to quit me. Thus we spent a whole year and at the end of it I had vowed to leave Hebrew teaching as a profession while the boys, at best, thought me personally hateful and stupid and, at worst, made me the symbol of what I taught and transferred their feelings for me to Judaism and the Jewish community.

The reader may have received the impression that the class was nothing but a continuous brawling chaos. Had there been more boys, this might well have been the case. But since there were only twelve boys, a different atmosphere reigned, one which was perhaps even more humiliating than open defiance—a weary disregard of me that would not even bother to exert itself to the point of rebellion, tempered by the apprehension of those minor disciplinary measures still at my disposal. Thus, a certain amount of work would get done, but always against the backdrop of open inattentiveness, of small talk and of whispering which I had to quell constantly at the exertion of every last ounce of energy in my nervous system. But ever so often even this semblance of order would collapse and I would lose all control of the class.

Each of these explosions left me wrought up and sick at heart for days because they brought home to me, with a shock that was traumatic in its impact, my absolute failure and my complete helplessness. Even after an hour's train-ride home, I would find myself shaking and trembling, compelled to rehearse the shameful scene over and over into my very dreams. Since the threat of these outbursts always hung over my head, my days, and my nights, were full of an anticipatory anxiety which never left me as long as I taught.

**S**ometimes, on a Friday or Saturday, when the burden of school was briefly lifted from me, I would spend

half the morning lying on the unmade bed in my shabby furnished room, thinking about my fate. My thoughts kept going round and round in my head and I could not stop them, try as I may. The same thoughts chased each other over and over, until I knew their unalterable sequence and their very texture: "Was this what I had studied for through four hard years? Was it going to be my fate to drill children in the Aleph Beth the rest of my life?" and so on and on. But the hub of all this mad whirling, the still axis around which all the tumult revolved, was a moral question: Whose fault was it? Whose fault was this mess that teaching had become? (All my success with the first and second class was as nothing in the face of my failure with the third.) To begin with, I was eager to blame myself. Yes, I was young and inexperienced, I did not sufficiently understand the children, I failed to enlist their interest. Yet, my personal shortcomings acknowledged and admitted, there remained enough to convince even my severest critic—myself—that it could not be all my fault. I knew that conditions almost everywhere were as bad as in my school and that thousands of teachers daily went through the same ordeal. So I continued my search for the culprit and hit on the Teacher's Institute. What good had it been, I asked myself, to teach me and my fellows the subtleties of the Talmud, the intricacies of grammar and the beauties of Bialik, if all we were ever going to teach was the Aleph Beth, reading drills, and elementary Bible? They should have taught us, I complained bitterly, how to take care of ourselves, how to silence an obstreperous child, how to quiet a riotous class. Instead we had been taught a lot of mumbo-jumbo about "core curriculum", "student motivation", and a great many other "high falutin" terms, most of which were preceded by the adjective "dynamic".

Still, I could not blame Yeshiva. If

their courses in pedagogy were unrealistic, they were no more so than equivalent courses in American colleges everywhere. The fact that we received the very best Hebrew education, redounded only to Yeshiva's credit. It was not Yeshiva's fault either that in most Talmud Torahs, we the teachers could put to use only a minute fraction of what we had learned, and that in consequence we were bound to be frustrated and disappointed. Nor was it the fault of afternoon school. If anything, it demonstrated that lag between the ideal and reality which can be bridged only by the hard work, the heartache and the poverty of those who have made themselves the instruments of the ideal.

Next, I fastened on the rabbi as the scapegoat, but I soon dismissed this fancy. True, the rabbi was the nominal principal of the school and had he been able to devote his full time and attention to the school, as a principal ought to do, he might have raised the school's level of education appreciably and smoothed out many a disciplinary problem before it had time to grow to unmanageable proportions. But I knew that this was not possible, because the rabbi was an overburdened and overworked man as it was. And yet, sometimes it seemed monstrous to me that when I needed help and advice, the most likely reaction I could expect would be that expression of politely repressed annoyance with which a busy executive responds to the plea of a blundering subordinate.

**M**y last attempt to cut through the confusion of possible culprits, was to put the blame at the feet of the congregation and to blame particularly the president and the members of the board of directors. After all, I reasoned, it was their school and they had it in their power to make things much easier for us (by giving us better classrooms etc.). I came to regard their refusal to do so

almost as a personal affront to me, and since this *idee fixe* was supported by several unfortunate experiences, I was for a long time completely unreasonable on this subject.

My war with the congregation began with the annual Purim play. I had observed how Mr. Samuel had handled the Chanukah play and, following his example, had chosen a script, assembled a troupe of players, and for weeks spent endless time, coming early and staying late, supervising rehearsals, preparing the wardrobe, props and doing all the other tasks that go into the making of a play. Need I say that I, like teachers everywhere, did not get a cent for overtime? When it was finally on the boards, the play proved a huge success which was due mainly to the inspired antics of my high-spirited second-classers. At one point there was a pillow fight on the open scene with Mordecai and Haman pelting each other in Queen Esther's boudoir to the shrieking delight of the 150 children in the audience. However the president of the synagogue did not find it amusing, for in his final speech he told the children that the spectacle had lacked what he called "a higher purpose." After having thus rebuked me publicly, he awarded Mr. Samuel \$25 for his work on the Chanukah play and, without wasting any further words, or money, on me, he swung into the *Hatikvah*.

The second incident occurred toward the end of the year. Figuring that I had nothing to lose, I sent to the board of directors a letter which began starkly: "Gentlemen, I am, without exaggeration, starving on the salary you are giving me now." There followed a long, itemized statement of my weekly expenses, rent, food, laundry bill, car fare and so forth down to the pennies I paid every morning for the *New York Times*. The final balance showed that my salary did not pay even for my necessities, not to speak of medical emergencies or buying a new

suit and a couple of shirts once a year. (Incidentally, this situation has not changed much, and though salaries are higher, so is the cost of living. Many Hebrew teachers therefore hold at least two jobs.) I closed my letter as follows: "In order not to fall into debt, I am forced to go without breakfast. (This was a fact.) Inasmuch as the cost of living has risen by 5% since the time I entered your employ, I feel you ought, in all fairness, increase my salary by the same percentage." I never received an acknowledgement to this letter.

It took me a number of years until I could forgive the board of directors. I realized then, that these were busy men who devoted most of their free time to the synagogue and that they had many obligations and limited funds. And I understood, that these men, too, were the products of the Talmud Torah system and that therefore they lacked the knowledge necessary to transcend the situation.

Thus I never found any single culprit but came to the conclusion that the faults were part of the entire system and that the stresses and strains were built right into the structure of the Talmud Torahs because they were devised from their inception as a half-way compromise between two irreconcilables. On the one hand, there is the necessity to integrate the children into the community, and for most American Jews this still means participation in Hebrew language services. On the other hand, neither authorities, nor parents, nor the children are willing to allot enough time to the schools to make the necessary instruction meaningful. The result is that ever new generations are set out to drift on ignorance and indifference.

The following year I was drafted into the army out of another teaching job which was neither better nor worse than the ones I have described. When I was discharged two years later, I did not return to Hebrew teaching.

# A Group of Verse

By CHARLES REZNIKOFF

## I

Blurred sight and trembling fingers—  
these alone are not the ills of age:  
the gluttony for *mine*  
that still would feed  
the failing *me*, the dying *I*.

## II

How grey you are! No, white!  
I see the body has struck its colors  
and flies the white flag.

Your friends are growing old  
and even the dog, after a block or two,  
scratches her master's coat  
to show she is tired.

## III

### FABLE

It is very pleasant to walk in the woods  
singing together and telling joke for joke,  
but sooner or later you will find yourself alone  
and a bear's cold muzzle nudging you.

Then do not tell your friend that he was false  
just because he ran away—as you might, too—  
and you are a fool to look for anything else  
than song for song and joke for joke.

## IV

### NIGHT-PIECE

I saw within the shadows of the yard the shed  
and saw the snow upon its roof—  
an oblong glowing in the moonlit night,  
an oblong glowing in the moonlit night.

I could not rest or close my eyes,  
although I knew that I must rise  
early next morning and begin my work again,  
and begin my work again.

That day was lost—that month and year,  
the next day would be lost as well;  
and year and year for all that I can tell.

CHARLES REZNIKOFF is well known as poet, novelist and historian. His last volume of verse appeared in 1941; "The Lionhearted," a novel, was published in 1944; and "The Jews of Charleston," a history, appeared in 1950.



Are Jews a "chosen" people? How does this "chosenness" manifest itself? Is the "free-thinking" Jew involved in this historic destiny of being different? WILL HERBERG, noted writer and lecturer, is author of "Judaism and Modern Man," and has just completed a study of religion in America, as well as an anthology of Martin Buber's writings.

## The "Chosenness" of Israel and the Jew of Today

By WILL HERBERG

**I**n all the vast and complex heritage of Jewish belief, that element, which, according to Solomon Schechter, was so pervasive that it hardly needed to be explicitly formulated, has for many Jews of today become the most difficult to accept, perhaps even to understand. The overwhelming majority of American Jews, like the overwhelming majority of other Americans, "believe in God," and take this belief to be the essence of their religion. But that God has in some sense singled them out for His service and made of them a "chosen people," this they find strange and incomprehensible. The "chosenness" of Israel, once the Jew's fundamental conviction about himself and his place in the world, has to all appearance become meaningless, if not actually unintelligible, to the great mass of American Jews of our time.

And yet, despite appearances, it is my feeling that this belief is very far from being as obsolete and meaningless as so many present day Jews think it is. On the contrary, recent events, as well as a good deal of current Jewish self-analysis, would seem to have given it a reality and relevance it did not appear to possess in the days before Hitler and Stalin. It is my conviction, in other words, that if

the modern Jew will only bring himself to face the fact of his Jewishness in the context of contemporary life, he will rediscover the meaning and power of the ancient doctrine of "chosenness."

### I

**R**ecent history teaches a strange lesson, which we modern Jews had lost sight of in the bright age of liberal cosmopolitanism. Roger Shinn, in a notable study, makes this lesson explicit in an illuminating comment: "Hitler found in the Jews (*by their very existence*), and in faithful Christians (*by their religious protests*), a reminder of the universalism . . . he could not tolerate" (emphasis added). What Dr. Shinn is saying here is something which we all must acknowledge once we really face the facts, that somehow the Jew, *simply by being a Jew*, constituted an offense and a challenge to Nazi totalitarianism in its time, as he does to Communist totalitarianism today. The Christian, so recent history teaches us, can make his peace with the totalitarian powers by apostasy, by ceasing to be a Christian; only the Christian who remains "faithful" and makes a "religious protest," as Dr. Shinn puts it, is a

real threat to the totalitarian despot. And very much the same is true of the secular humanist; he too can abandon his humanistic creed and make his peace with the regime. But the Jew? Strangely enough, it is not what the Jew happens to believe or affirm that makes him so intolerable to the totalitarian; it is his *Jewishness*, his *being a Jew*. And of his Jewishness, of his being a Jew, he cannot rid himself, do what he may.

If we look a little closer, we discern some logic in this insensate totalitarian hatred of the Jew. Totalitarianism is essentially the absorption of all human life by the state. The meaning of human existence is felt by totalitarianism to be completely comprehended in the national community, of which the state is the embodiment. That is why totalitarianism is inherently chauvinistic, and why chauvinism always harbors a totalitarian potential. The very idea of a dimension of human existence that transcends the social and political, and passes beyond the limits of society and state, is something that cannot be tolerated in a system whose maxim is "everything in and through the state, nothing outside the state," and whose claim is to the totality of life. In such a society, it is possible, as I have suggested, for the Christian or the secular humanist to save himself and make his peace with the regime by abandoning his Christian witness or his humanistic ideals, by surrendering whatever may challenge the self-enclosed ultimacy of the totalitarian state. But the Jew somehow has this challenge built into his being, because built into his being is a transnational, trans-cultural, trans-political dimension that makes him irrevocably and irreducibly "different." He may resent his being "different," he may desire to get rid of it; he may even make a strenuous effort to come to terms with his world and conform to its totalistic pattern — but so long as he remains a Jew, so long as he remains known as a Jew, he cannot

possibly succeed. The Christian and the secular democrat have it within their power to cease to be Christians or democrats; but can the Jew ever "un-Jew" himself? Can he, by anything he may do, rid himself of that in him which makes him so intolerable to a Hitler or a Stalin? History gives its own answer, and that answer is unequivocally in the negative.

It would seem, then, as though the Jew were "chosen," through his very Jewishness, to be a witness against totalitarianism. If we define the conviction that nothing of this world, no idea, institution, or individual, no man, or nation, or "ism," may be divinized and worshipped as something ultimate, if we define this conviction as the "principle of anti-idolatry," then we can state it as the inescapable lesson of history that the Jew is the living embodiment of this principle. He is that not only because the principle stems directly from his religious tradition, but also and more fundamentally because any violation of it—any tendency to absolutize a man, a nation, a culture, a system, or an "ism"—sooner or later brings with it a threat to his very existence as a Jew, no matter how otherwise well established in society he may be. The Jew, it has been said with considerable insight, is a kind of living litmus paper by which the spiritual health of a society or culture may be judged.

This fact, so clearly evidenced in recent history, is not peculiar to our time. The tendency of ideas, institutions, and systems to absolutize themselves is perennial in human affairs; man is always prone to make absolute, idolatrous claims for himself and his works, and to strive to comprehend all life in their terms. Whenever that happens, and to the degree that it happens, the Jew falls into trouble: his merely *being a Jew* is felt to be an intolerable challenge and affront. Whether it is the Hellenistic effort to establish a divinized world culture, or the

medieval attempt to exalt Christendom as indeed the very City of God, or the Nazi and Communist efforts to erect a divinized total state: it is always the Jew who is the enemy to be singled out and destroyed.

In the face of such facts, it would seem hard to avoid the conclusion that somehow, in some way, the Jew has, through the centuries, been made to serve a certain very distinctive function in history—the function of calling into question, by his very Jewishness, the self-idolizing, self-absolutizing tendencies in men and society. The fact may be variously interpreted and explained, but it remains a fact, a hard, undeniable fact, a fact that would seem, on the face of it, to give real contemporaneous content to the traditional Jewish conviction of "chosenness." For after all, as Buber has pointed out, the important thing "is not whether we feel or do not feel that we are chosen . . . [The important thing is rather] that our role in history actually has been unique." It is history in the first place that speaks to the modern Jew about the meaning of his "chosenness."

## II

**B**ut history is not something that comes upon the individual from the outside; it is really the interior life of man externalized. Does not the testimony that history gives of the "chosenness" of Israel reflect, and is it not reflected by, the sense of "chosenness" that permeates the life and behavior of the individual Jew, however much he may repudiate the doctrine?

It is a mere commonplace, yet an important truth nevertheless, that the Jew, whatever his position in society or his field of activity, is aware not only that he is "different," but that something different is expected of him — in the first place, by himself. The Jewish businessman will acknowledge a special ethical

obligation ("There are certain things a Jew doesn't do!"), even as he violates it and tries to make up for his shortcomings by philanthropy. The Zionist may vehemently asseverate, and perhaps even believe, that he is just another "nationalist" striving to regain his "national homeland," but he betrays himself in his every word and thought which breathes the passion of the age-old messianic idea. The Jewish socialist too reveals the messianic origins of the impulse that animates him, and indeed often relates his "idealism" to "Jewish ethics," just as the Jewish scholar or scientist will find his intellectual concern quite natural in view of the "Jewish tradition of learning" and the "Jewish zeal for truth." I have myself heard Jewish labor leaders, men remote indeed from the faith and practice of Judaism, explain confidentially that their "progressivism" was somehow the consequence of their being Jewish. These things are matters of common experience, and I have yet to find a Jew who does not in some manner or form exhibit this profound sense of "difference" and special vocation. It is simply a fact that "consciously or not, the Jew moves in the context of a long and special history and religio-ethical tradition that lays upon him, whether as a burden or as a badge of pride, the sense of being 'chosen' . . ." (Elliot E. Cohen, ed., *Commentary on the American Scene*). Let the Jew who rejects the doctrine of "chosenness" examine his conscience and see whether these words do not ring true to the inmost reality of his being.

A phenomenology of Jewish character as affected by the hidden conviction of "chosenness" still remains to be written. It would have to include cases like Disraeli, about whom a recent critic remarks acutely that his "awareness of being 'different' gave him self-confidence and an abiding detachment," and it would have to include others with whom the consciousness of difference has made for anx-

iety and self-rejection. It would have to show how the Jew's recalcitrance to becoming totally absorbed in his environment and in the claims of success and power has given him a keener social vision and a greater sensitivity to social evil, but also how at the same time it has made him more susceptible to utopian schemes and to entrapment in false messianic movements like Communism. It would have to indicate how the consciousness of being a Jew often operates to create a high sense of *noblesse oblige*, but also how it can degenerate into the senseless arrogance that makes the word "Jewish" stand for everything right and proper and its antonym "goy" for everything gross and brutish. It would have to show how the Jew, in his Jewishness, acquires his "intellectual preeminence," but often at the price of becoming, for good or bad, a "disturber of the intellectual peace," "an alien of uneasy feet," "an intellectual wayfaring man, a wanderer in the intellectual No Man's Land, . . . seeking another place to rest, further along the road, somewhere over the horizon . . ." (Thorstein Veblen). Everywhere the hidden effects of the sense of "chosenness" would reveal themselves, and testify that through this sense of being "chosen," an extra dimension has indeed been added to Jewish life and personality.

**T**he reference to Thorstein Veblen may serve to remind us that in recent years it has been the sociologists, psychologists, and historians, rather than the theologians, who have, in however indirect a manner, called attention to the Jew's hidden sense of "chosenness" and to its wide ramifications in individual and social life. A considerable documentation could be compiled from the writings of these specialists, but such documentation would, after all, be not nearly so impressive as the everyday testimony that the Jew himself gives in his thinking,

feeling, and behavior, in his very life as a Jew in a non-Jewish world.

The events of the past two decades have strikingly reversed the earlier trend toward "assimilation" on the part of American Jews; a new urge to self-identification as Jews is to be noted among all sections of American Jewry, particularly perhaps among the younger people. But this has raised in a new form an old problem of profound significance: *What does it mean to be a Jew?* It cannot be simply by virtue of belonging to a particular race, or to a particular nation, or to a particular culture, or even to a particular religious denomination, that one is a Jew. Many and diverse racial strains are to be found among Jews; Jews have, and have long had, the most varied national origins, allegiances, and cultures; and even those Jews who renounce the Jewish religion, or religion in general, somehow remain Jews. The answer to the question, "What does it mean to be a Jew?", is not an easy one; perhaps no final or complete answer can be given. But is it not true that when the Jew of today, whether he is "religious" or "non-religious" — perhaps even sooner in the latter case than in the former — comes to examine himself in order to make sense of his Jewishness, some inkling of "difference," of "chosenness," necessarily enters into his own understanding of himself as a Jew?

### III

**S**ociologists, psychologists, and historians not blinded by doctrinaire formulas have, as I have suggested, long noted and documented these facts of Jewish existence as they manifest themselves in individual life and society. They have their interpretations and explanations, of course. There is no occasion whatever for quarreling with them, for there is a great deal of truth in what they say as far as it goes. The anomalous position of the



Jew in the non-Jewish world, his marginality, his apparently ineradicable minority status, do indeed make him an "outsider," somehow *in*, but never entirely *of*, the world in which he finds himself. Thus he can hardly avoid putting a note of interrogation to every established dogma or institution; his very being a Jew does that, whether he desires it or not. His very Jewish "particularism," because it transcends every national and cultural boundary, becomes strangely enough a vehicle and witness to universalism. The distinctiveness of the Jew, his sense of "difference" and "chosenness," as well as his special role in history are thus understood as functions of his anomalous position in society.

This may be granted, but the question always arises: *Why* this unique and anomalous position in which the Jew is forever barred from losing himself in the mass and becoming "like everyone else"? Other groups there are which have been marginal and "unadjusted" in this or that society, under such and such circumstances — but the Jew is marginal and "unadjusted" everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances. However genuinely at home he may feel in his society, he remains the "eternal outsider," and neither he nor his society can ever really lose awareness of this fact.

Explaining it all in terms of anti-Semitism merely begs the question. What is this anti-Semitism that has accompanied the Jew from the beginning of his historical career till this very day, despite all changes in social, economic, political, and cultural conditions? Is it not, after all, really the obverse of the problem of Jewishness? The sociologists, psychologists, and historians can teach us a great deal, but when they have had their say, the fundamental fact still remains a fact, neither "explained" nor explained away: Jewish existence, individual and collective, bears witness to a sense of "difference" that is immediately recognizable as the substance

of the traditional belief in "chosenness."

It is at this point that the modern Jew, who shies away from the explicit doctrine of "chosenness," ought to begin to question himself. Is it not true that his own sense of being "different" and standing under a special responsibility points beyond itself? Does not the sense of "chosenness" raise the question of "*chosen*" by *whom*? The question may be phrased in various ways, employing or avoiding the traditional vocabulary, but posed in some manner it must be by the Jew who is not afraid to pursue the logic of his Jewishness. Most modern-minded Jews, if they can get themselves to face the question at all, tend to answer it in terms of "history" or "destiny"; not so long ago, quasi-racist theories of "innate gifts" and a special *Volksgeist* of Hegelian provenance were quite popular. But do not all such answers, welcome as they are in testifying to the ineradicable conviction of "chosenness," tend to turn history, or destiny, or the alleged *Volksgeist* into a kind of god before which we must bow as the ultimate law of life? And somehow this kind of god we cannot swallow. There is something in us that responds to the warning, "There is no god but God," and drives us beyond all premature and arbitrary absolutes to the transcendent.

Dostoevsky, who cannot be accused of too great a fondness for Jews, once affirmed his conviction that no Jew, whatever he might say, could really be an atheist. We can now see what he meant. The Jewish "atheist," if he is a Jew at all, in effect proclaims: "There is no God, but we are His people!" He may vehemently, and quite sincerely, assert that he does not "believe in God," but does not his very being as a Jew testify to the *existential* belief still alive within him that "there is no god but God" and that the Jews are His people?

What I am contending, in short, is that

the Jew's sense of his "chosenness" — and this sense would seem to be operative in all Jews who hold themselves to be Jews, and perhaps even in those who reject their Jewishness — is an implicit *religious* affirmation which inevitably points beyond itself to the God who acts to "choose." Jewish existence, as Dostoevsky saw, is intrinsically religious and God-oriented. Jews may be led to deny, repudiate, and reject their "chosenness" and its responsibilities, but then their own Jewishness rises to confront them as refutation and condemnation. "God, Torah, and Israel" do indeed form the indivisible unity of tradition, each member of the triad implying, and being implied by, the others.

#### IV

**T**his approach to the question may seem rather devious to those accustomed to think of religion as a system of abstract metaphysical propositions about God and morality. From such a point of view, "belief in God" comes first as the foundation of "ethical monotheism," and only afterward, if at all, comes the corollary of the "chosenness" of Israel. But such is not the way of Jewish religious tradition, Biblical and rabbinic. In Jewish religious tradition, it is the conviction of "chosenness," of Israel's being the covenanted people of God, that is the central fact. The God of Jewish faith is not an abstract "Supreme Being," but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, the God of the Covenant, who redeemed His people from the darkness of Egypt and "chose" them to be His witnesses forever. This is the primordial confession of Jewish faith: the conviction of "chosenness" lies at its very heart.

In Jewish tradition, the People Israel is conceived of as neither a nation nor a religious group in the ordinary sense; in Jewish tradition, Israel is understood as a people "called" into being by God to

serve His purposes in the world. It is understood as a community created by God's special act of covenant, first with Abraham, whom He "called" out of the heathen world, and then, supremely, with Israel collectively at Sinai. The "choosing" is also a *calling*, a vocation, "a summons and a sending"; what Israel is called to is best expressed in the rabbinic formula, *kiddush ha-Shem*, the "sanctification of the Name." Stripped of its mystical and metaphysical overtones, this rabbinic formula means to bear witness to the God of Israel amidst the idolatries of the world, to proclaim in word and deed, in life and thought, that "there is no god but God," and to "give the world no rest so long as it has no God" (Jacques Maritain). The late Judah Magnes was speaking true to the Biblical-rabbinic teaching when he declared: "It is the Jew's historical function to question, to challenge, to deny every idolatry which the world in its self-delusion comes to worship, whether this idolatry be of nature, of science, or of state and society—and beyond these, to point to God. This is his real reason for existence."

The vocation of Israel as witness against idolatry emerges with particular force in the relations between Jew and Christian, Israel and the Church. "It is important that there always be Judaism," Paul Tillich, the distinguished Protestant theologian, has testified. "It is the corrective against the paganism that goes along with Christianity . . ." No one who recalls the experience of the churches in Germany during the days of Nazism will fail to see the relevance of Tillich's words; their truth is a truth evidenced by the whole history of Christendom. The Christian who is tempted to bow the knee to the idolatrous gods of his society and culture, will always find in the Jew an accusing witness against him, for in the Jew he will see the victim of the idols he is prone to worship.

Anti-Semitism is the "natural" conse-

quence of this witness to God in a world beset with idolatry; however it may express itself, at bottom anti-Semitism reflects the revolt of man and society against the God of Israel and His absolute demand. This was obvious in pre-Christian anti-Semitism, but it is also true of anti-Semitism in the Christian world, where "hatred of Judaism is at bottom hatred of Christianity" (Maritain). For, as Franz Rosenzweig so clearly saw, "whenever the pagan within the Christian soul rises in revolt against the yoke of the Cross, he vents his fury on the Jew." Very much the same view has been set forth by a number of recent psychologists and sociologists, who see the Jew as representing the "bad conscience of Christian civilization" and anti-Semitism as a kind of revolt against the "spiritual collective super-ego" (Ernst Simmel). We recall what the rabbis say of the Mountain of the Covenant: "It is called Sinai because *sinah*, hatred [toward Israel] came down to the nations because of it" (b. Shab. 89b).

**A**lthough it converts Jewry into an "exposed signal station flashing a warning of the wandering of Satan upon the earth" (Magnes), the "chosenness" of Israel has always been the bulwark of its existence. It was the conviction of "chosenness" that enabled the Jew to defy the powers of destruction and to reverse the normal patterns of history. Military defeat and the annihilation of nation and state did not mean the end of Jewry or the extinction of its hopes; on the contrary, it inspired the emergence of Israel in a new form and with a more profound consciousness of its destiny. Precisely because his Jewishness has never been completely tied to state or territory, to culture or nation, but has always been defined in terms of the suprahistorical reality of his "chosenness," the Jew has been able to survive all the disasters of history. The Jew has always found a

home in the Covenant whenever he has been at odds with the world, for it is the Covenant that is his true "fatherland," and the world that confronts him with the need for redemption.

Within the corporate vocation of Israel, the individual Jew, according to Biblical-rabbinic teaching, finds his own "calling," and therewith also the meaning and power of his life. He sees himself a "son of the Covenant," upon whom has been laid a great and special responsibility of "sanctifying the Name." He understands that the fateful question for him is not, as religious "liberalism" would have it, "Shall I or shall I not be a Jew? Have I or have I not been 'chosen'?" The real question he finds on an altogether different level; it is: "Shall I recognize my 'chosenness', my special 'calling', and live an *authentic* life; or shall I deny it, and as a consequence, live an *inauthentic* one?" Judaism, in sum, means living out the affirmative decision.

It will thus be seen that in the tradition of Jewish faith, Judaism, Jewishness, being-a-Jew, is not primarily or essentially a doctrine, a moral code, or a system of observances, although it does in some way include all of these. Judaism, Jewishness, being-a-Jew, in the tradition of faith, is primarily and essentially a *vocation*, a "calling" under God, which defines the Jew's position and responsibilities in the world. The Jewish religious tradition, on its human side, may best be understood as the Jew's attempt through the ages to discern, define, and implement his vocation under God.

## V

**T**o the believing Jew of tradition, the "chosenness" of Israel was a central fact, a basic reality, illuminating every aspect of his existence as a Jew. Yet for most Jews today, even for those who hold themselves to be religious, the doctrine of "chosenness" is a scandal and an of-

fense. We have a vague distaste for it; it somehow runs counter to our modernity and to too many of our intellectual and moral presuppositions. Even though, as I have been insisting, the Jew cannot help but exemplify the hidden conviction of "chosenness" in his life and thought, the modern Jew, at least, feels very uncomfortable with the doctrine and is moved to reject it whenever he comes face to face with it.

Why is this doctrine of "chosenness" so hard for the modern Jew to accept, even when he still lives in its light? The reasons, I think, are of various orders. There are, first, the intellectual, or philosophical, objections, frequently held by people who profess a religious view of life. A truly rational and universal God, it is maintained, could not do anything so arbitrary as to "choose" one particular group out of mankind as a whole. It is indeed "odd of God to choose the Jews" because it is odd of God to "choose" anybody. God is the God of all alike, and therefore cannot make distinctions between nations and peoples. To this is added the moral argument that the doctrine of "chosenness" is little better than crude ethnocentrism, in which a particular group regards itself as the center of the universe and develops doctrines that will flatter its pride and minister to its glory. Such notions are held to be primitive and unworthy of being embodied in a "mature" religion.

These arguments are, in fact, far from modern. They were all advanced, almost two thousand years ago, by pagan philosophers like Celsus, who made them the basis of a powerful polemic against Judaism and Christianity. What can we say to these arguments, whether ancient or modern? Well, in the first place, it may be pointed out that to be scandalized by the universal God acting in and through the particularities of time, place, and history, is to conceive the divine in essentially impersonal, intellectual terms. Universal

ideas are impersonal and timeless, and if religion is simply the apprehension of universal ideas, then of course the particularistic claims of Jewish faith are absurd on the face of it. But if religion is a matter of personal relation and action, as both Judaism and Christianity affirm, the matter takes on an altogether different aspect. Truly personal relations are never universal; they are always concrete and particular. And while an idea or a doctrine may be made available to all men universally and timelessly, action must necessarily be particular in the sense that it is action here and now, in reference to this particular group or person rather than to another. The insistence on historical particularity contained in the notion of "chosenness" is thus seen to be part of the Biblical-rabbinic affirmation of a "living" God, who meets man in personal encounter in the context of life and history. Within the framework of Jewish faith, therefore, the doctrine of "chosenness" constitutes no incongruity; it is only to abstract and self-sufficient human reason that it constitutes a scandal and offense. But then to abstract and self-sufficient human reason, all history, in its inexpugnable particularity, must constitute the same kind of scandal and offense.

Nor does the moral argument hold up any better. The most superficial reading of Scripture is enough to indicate that the teaching about the "chosenness" of Israel is as far as possible from being an ethnocentric device of self-flattery and self-glorification. The covenant by which Israel is "chosen" is never held to mean that Israel is better, or wiser, or more deserving than the "nations of the world"; on the contrary, the fickleness, obduracy, and disobedience of the people is constantly emphasized to highlight the miracle of God's love and steadfastness. Nor is the "chosenness" interpreted as implying special privilege for Israel; just the reverse, the "choosing" is a demand



and a summons upon Israel; involving greater obligation, heavier responsibility, a harder destiny, and a sterner judgment: "You only have I known among all the families of the earth; *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). Finally, though the "choosing" of Israel is the "choosing" of a particular group to act in the particularities of time and history, its purpose is universal, to promote the supreme welfare of all mankind: "In you [Abraham] shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3), "I the Lord have called you in righteousness . . . and have made you a light for the nations" (Is. 42:6). Whatever may be the corruptions which the doctrine of "chosenness" has suffered at various times in the long history of the Jews, the doctrine itself, as it appears in normative Jewish faith, is anything but the crude ethnocentrism its critics accuse it of being.

But, of course, neither the philosophical nor the moral argument really gets to the heart of the difficulty. The fundamental objection of the Jew, today as ever, is not that the doctrine of "chosenness" offends rational or ethical principles, but rather that it places an altogether unbearable burden upon him and condemns him to be "different," the "eternal stranger," the "marginal man," the "suffering servant." Throughout the centuries, the Jew, being human, all too human, has rebelled against the "yoke of the Covenant," and has demanded the right to be "like unto the nations." The Bible is full of the protests of the "natural" man in the Israelite against the demand of God and the destiny of Israel, and current discussions about the "normalization" of Jewish life reecho these protests in a hundred different ways. "Chosenness" is a *calling*, "a summons and a sending," a "summons" to obedience and a "sending" to service, sometimes even to suffering and death, and those

who do not find it in their hearts to be able to obey and serve and suffer — and how many of us can truly say that we do? — are only too prone to deny the calling and reject the doctrine in which it is embodied.

It is, however, part of the force of divine providence (or of historical factuality) that the protests of the recalcitrant Jew against the unwanted distinction have rarely been more than a vain cry of outrage and embitterment. Life and history — the man of faith would say God — have somehow refused to free him of the burden of his uniqueness, and he has gone through the ages an often unwilling witness to the God he is tempted to deny.

## VI

**T**o the traditional Jew, the "chosenness" of Israel was a central fact, ever present in his consciousness. The *kidush* he repeated on Sabbaths and festivals was a constant proclamation of it; in the *Alenu*, the climax of the daily liturgy, he thanked God for it; in every prayer, he was reminded of it. Indeed, no phase of his life was without some acknowledgment of the "chosenness" of Israel. It was the cornerstone of his personal existence as a Jew, as it was of the corporate existence of Jewry.

For the Jew of today, everything has become problematic. Yet ultimately, the Jew of today too must come face to face with the fact of his Jewishness, and every attempt to do so almost at once raises the question of "chosenness" and demands an answer. The "chosenness" of Israel, whether believed in or not, is an inescapable fact for the Jew. He cannot think or live as a Jew without in some way implying it. For better or for worse, it confronts him as a destiny which he cannot escape because he cannot escape himself and his history.

This account of the experiences of the first Israel Legation to the Soviet Union is a chapter from "Way of Valor," a biography of GOLDA MYERSON, Israel's first Minister to Russia, to be published by Sharon Books this Fall. MARIE SYRKIN, of the staff of Brandeis University, is a writer on Jewish and general subjects and an editor of *Jewish Frontier*.

## Mission to Moscow

By MARIE SYRKIN

**T**he Israel Legation, consisting of twenty-one people including children, arrived at the airport, forty miles from Moscow, on September 3, 1948. As soon as the party reached the capital it was received by official representatives. As it happened to be the day of Zhdanov's funeral, a long procession held up all cars. Out of courtesy to the Israelis, the Russian Chief of Protocol had the procession stopped for a moment so that the newly arrived representatives might be enabled to proceed. This deference was impressive to the green diplomats.

For the first few months the Israeli mission was lodged at the Metropole, a first class Russian hotel. Later Israel received an eleven-room house on Glazovskiy Pereulok, which served both as office and residence. A large amount of household equipment and foodstuffs had been brought from Israel and Europe. The size of the staff was gradually curtailed when it became apparent that the original number was too large for the tasks within its province.

The mere physical process of establishing a legation in Moscow was difficult, especially with a limited budget. Hard pressed Israel, in addition to its other headaches, discovered that diplomacy was costly and that each fresh recognition of the state added to the strain on

a scant treasury. In Moscow almost everything had to be brought from abroad, and it was hard to get adequate service. Golda Myerson threw herself energetically into the housekeeping problems presented. Various members of her staff, both men and women, recall apparent trifles: she helped to tack down carpets and faithfully took her turn at washing the dishes if there was a maid shortage. The fact that the Minister remained Golda, friendly, informal, instead of turning into an aloof diplomat, was an enormous aid to the morale of the legation. Actually, Golda rather enjoyed some of the housekeeping chores. She took a normal, feminine pleasure in shopping and examining the huge government cooperatives of Gastronom, always plentifully stocked with meat, fish, cheese and other foodstuffs.

Golda, in the true tradition of Labor Palestine, had organized the legation in the style of a kibbutz. Everybody sat down to dinner together, including the cook. Hotel expenses were paid directly from a central fund. Pocket money was apportioned equally to all, the chauffeur getting as much as Madam Minister. No salaries were paid. It had been Golda's hope that this would remain the established pattern, but the kibbutz arrangement did not last beyond the first year. After her departure, the Israel Treasury

determined a salary scale which proved to be so much more than the staff members had received under her idealistic aegis that they quite humanly applied for back pay which was refused.

The modest Israel legation was warmly welcomed by the foreign journalists and the diplomatic corps. The Israelis were something of a sensation because they represented the dramatically arisen Jewish State. That the Minister was a woman added to the interest. Golda was the second woman in the diplomatic corps, the first one being Mrs. Pandit. The Soviet itself had few women diplomats. Russian women were very active in the life of the country, frequently in highly technical capacities. Women might be directors of factories, agriculturalists, engineers, but only a small number played major parts in politics, so that a woman diplomat was bound to excite curiosity.

Ticklish questions of protocol arose because at the time that Golda arrived only a few states had as yet recognized Israel. Diplomatic relations could only be enjoyed with the legations of a limited number of countries but there were many occasions when all representatives would meet at a formal reception. Relations with the British were understandably strained at first. The American Walter Bedell Smith was just as understandably helpful and cordial.

Until a minister presents his letters of credential he has no official existence. Before the presentation he receives a briefing from the Chief of Protocol giving exact instructions as to the procedure. The question of dress had to be considered. Men wore uniforms or tails. The only other woman, Mrs. Pandit, had worn a sari. Golda's national costume might have been the white cotton dress which the pioneers wore festively on the Sabbath, but this obviously would not do. It was decided that Golda should

wear a long black dress with long sleeves. She would be further adorned with a black velvet hat and a string of pearls. The hat represented a real sacrifice, since Golda rarely wore one. The pearls, costing all of ten dollars, had been hastily bestowed on her by a friend before her departure from Israel when it was discovered that Golda had no "jewelry" except some Israeli brooches.

Golda presented her credentials on September 11, a week after her arrival in Moscow. A motion picture release of her reception by Shvernik, President of the Soviets, was shown in all the cinemas of Israel where the people could see with what beauty and dignity she fulfilled her role. This was a great moment in Jewish history, and she walked toward it tall, regal, glowing. The audience in the Tel Aviv cinema shouted joyously, *Golda shelanu*, "our Golda," while close friends watched her ceremonial progress on this film silently and a bit awed.

Now the legation could begin to function. Its primary task, as that of every other embassy, was the development of normal, friendly political and economic relations with Russia. Some commercial negotiations were started but by and large the tasks of the legation were routine within a rigidly circumscribed framework. Relations with the Russians were strictly formal with no social contacts outside the line of duty. Israel was no exception to the familiar pattern. Friendly terms were established with other members of the diplomatic corps, a process in which Golda's personal popularity was decisive. Even the British were eventually won over.

The Israel Legation kept open house informally every Friday night. The refreshments were coffee, tea, and cake, but in the isolated atmosphere of Moscow, the opportunity to visit was particularly welcome to foreigners. Press correspondents generally dropped in. Foreign Jews,

English and American fur merchants or Belgian tobacco dealers who happened to be in Moscow, found the Israel Legation a godsend. The Friday nights were merry and crowded, but no Russian Jew ventured to come.

The Israelis had few illusions about the possibility of establishing ties with the some three million Russian Jews. It was assumed that Jewish consciousness had become extinct since the Revolution and that any Zionist sentiment, in view of merciless government persecution for three decades, was long dead. To the physical destruction of European Jewry had to be added the spiritual loss of Russian Jewry.

As if to drive home this realization, a diatribe against Zionism, written by Ilyah Ehrenburg, was reprinted in *Einigkeit*, the Yiddish Communist publication, a few days after Golda's arrival. Lest Russian Jews misunderstand the recognition of Israel, Ehrenburg, a perennially enthusiastic exponent of the Soviet line, whatever that might be, proceeded to expound the familiar thesis: There was no Jewish people. Jews in Soviet Russia and the satellite countries had nothing to do with the Jewish State which was solely for the oppressed of the imperialist countries. It was ridiculous to speak of a common interest among Jews. One might just as well speak of a common bond among red-headed people, and more of the same.

The day the article appeared a foreign correspondent came to Golda for comment, which she gave without mincing words. Only a couple of years before, Ehrenburg had noted another common bond — the blood of Jews of every country which had soaked the continent of Europe. The foreign correspondent, a friend of Ehrenburg, suggested that Golda meet him. Golda agreed but Ehrenburg never came. Some months later the same correspondent pointed out Ehrenburg to her at a Czech diplomatic reception. Golda reminded him of his offer. He

went over to Ehrenburg and came back with a message that Ehrenburg was willing to meet Golda but was not prepared to discuss politics. Golda sent back word that she was prepared not to meet him. Nevertheless, later in the evening, at about 3:00 A.M., Ehrenburg came over, obviously in his cups. Correspondents and diplomats immediately surrounded the pair. Ehrenburg asked if Golda spoke Russian or French; Golda said she spoke Hebrew or English. At which Ehrenburg announced: "I hate Jews who speak English," to which Golda replied: "I am accustomed to Jews who speak Hebrew or at least Yiddish." These exchanges went on, Ehrenburg speaking Russian, which Golda understood, and Golda speaking English. The surrounding crowd chuckled at the firmness with which Golda stood her ground in hostile territory.

**T**he conversation with Ehrenburg was dispiriting if not unexpected. During the years of the Hitler massacre, when it had been to Russia's interest to tap each source of anti-German feeling, Ehrenburg had been among the most eloquent and dutifully vocal of the mourners for European Jewry. Then the tie of a common history and a common fate had been apparent to him and other Russian journalists—red blood and not red hair. But now the pens had to scratch to another tune, and it seemed hardly possible that, except for a few oldsters who still attended synagogue, any sense of Jewish identity had remained among the Jews of Russia. Then something happened which was in the nature of an eye-opener both to the world and to the Soviet authorities.

Before leaving Israel Golda had decided that she and her staff would attend synagogue services in Russia. Though neither Golda nor any members of her legation were orthodox, it was fitting to join whatever small conscious Jewish community existed on the first Saturday after the presentation of credentials. Golda asked the



men in her party to equip themselves with prayer-shawls and prayer-books and whatever else might be ritually needful.

On the first Sabbath the legation went to the one synagogue in Moscow, that of Rabbi Maze, which had received the stamp of official approval. Of the some half million Jews in Moscow, about three hundred were in attendance, mostly old men. Here and there, a young face might be seen. No one had known that the Israel delegation would attend except the Rabbi. In the course of the service there was a prayer for rulers of the state. The Rabbi invoked the blessings of the Almighty on Stalin, and then offered a prayer for Golda.

After the service a man came up to the women's section, where Golda had been seated, to ask if she would go down to meet the Rabbi. He also wanted to know whether in Israel, rabbis shake hands with a woman. This was, of course, a delicate reminder that an orthodox rabbi could not touch the hand of any female, except that of his wife, and even she had to be ritually clean. Golda was careful not to embarrass the old man and did not extend her hand. There was tremendous excitement among the male worshippers as she was led through the hall on the way out. They followed her out of the synagogue; in the crowd she became separated from her party. As it was Saturday, the delegation had come part of the way on foot so as not to offend the sensibilities of the worshippers. An elderly man, noticing that she was alone, walked up to her and said in Yiddish: "Don't talk to me; I'll walk ahead and you follow." When Golda was within reach of her hotel, her guide turned around, recited the Hebrew blessing, *Shechianu*, "Blessed art Thou, oh Lord, King of the universe, Who hast preserved us and brought us alive to this moment," and vanished.

The Israelis did not go again to the synagogue till Rosh Hashanah, a few weeks later. Intuitively, Golda felt that

too frequent appearances would not be politic. Though no announcement of the Legation's intention had been made, it was apparently assumed by the Moscow public that the Israelis would attend the synagogue during the High Holidays. When they appeared, the street near the synagogue was so packed with people that Golda literally had to be dragged through the crowd. The normal attendance on the High Holidays was generally about two thousand. On this occasion the crowds overflowing the adjoining streets were estimated as being between thirty and fifty thousand people. Thousands of young men and women could be seen, including Red Army officers and soldiers. The Soviet authorities had expected no such demonstration and no special police arrangements had been made. When Golda appeared she was instantly engulfed in the crowd. A remarkable photograph, which someone fortunately snapped, shows Golda's head literally among a sea of people of all ages looking excited and joyous. An added touch to the drama was the presence of some German war prisoners stolidly watching the Israeli triumph from adjoining buildings.

In the women's gallery women kept coming up to touch Golda or to kiss her dress. The service, always solemn, this time had an added tension. At the conclusion, when Golda left the synagogue, she was again surrounded. One old man kept bobbing up in front of her periodically, croaking: *Goldele, leben sollst du, shana tova*. ("Goldele, long life to you, happy New Year.") The crowd would sweep him away but he would reappear to offer his ecstatic greeting. Finally the main thoroughfare was reached. The throng had become so dangerous in its size and emotionalism that Golda's companions thrust her into a taxi despite the holiday, but the crowd flowed around the taxi. Golda put out her head and said to them in Yiddish: *A dank eich vos ihr seit ge-*

*blieben Yiden* ("Thank you for having remained Jews"). Finally the taxi was permitted to proceed.

She did not attend the service on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. The experience had been too moving. As she put it: "We all went to pieces."

A few days later, on Yom Kippur, the Legation went for Kol Nidre. The streets leading to the synagogue were again filled with the same enormous crowds. This time, however, the authorities had been forewarned. Golda had been instructed not to leave the synagogue till the crowd had dispersed. But at the end of the service the congregation did not budge. Neither did the waiting crowd outside. Ten policemen appeared, cleared an aisle and went upstairs to the women's gallery to escort Golda through a basement and a back street. But the crowds sensed the trick and rushed to the side street through which Golda was supposed to make a quiet exit. A procession formed spontaneously, headed by Golda who was surrounded by police, with the throng following. So they marched through the streets of Moscow. The Russians along the way watched this extraordinary spectacle in bewilderment. They had seen nothing like it. Golda would hear an explanatory note to the puzzled bystanders: *Eto nasha Golda*, the Russian for *Golda Shelanu*, "our Golda."

The same demonstration took place on Yom Kippur day. The service was particularly stirring. At Yiskor, the prayer for the dead, the congregation prayed for the men of Hagana who had fallen. When the congregation recited the prayer, *L'shanah habaha b'Yerushalaim* ("Next year in Jerusalem"), the long suppressed feeling reached its climax. Of that moment Golda said: "The words shook the synagogue as they looked up at me. It was the most passionate Zionist speech I had ever heard."

Apparently in crowds people were not afraid to show their true feelings. One

man edged up to a member of the Israeli Legation and whispered: "This is the answer to Ehrenburg's article." But no individual ventured to establish contact with the Israelis. Even close relatives of members of the Legation made no attempt to visit or to communicate with their kin. Any traffic with foreigners was suspect, and it was easier not to see a brother than to run the risk of being sent to Siberia.

Once, on the street, a man walked up to Sarele, Golda's daughter, and addressed her in Hebrew. It turned out that he had been an original member of the kibbutz Tel Yoseph in the twenties. He had left Palestine with a disgruntled group who had decided that social redemption was to be found in the Socialist Fatherland rather than in the fields of the Emek. He was obviously much moved when he spoke to Sarele. He wanted to know about a sister he had in Tel Aviv. He asked about Berl Katzenelson, the teacher and spiritual leader of Palestinian pioneer youth, not knowing that Berl had been dead some years. Sarele invited the former kibbutznik to the Legation, but he said: "No, I suppose I have been followed already," and disappeared. For Sarele it was a shattering experience — "That human beings should be so afraid!"

On another occasion a member of the Legation went to a large office building. A young fellow offered to direct him to the room he wanted. Suddenly, in the corridor with no one around, he slipped the Israeli a note. It read: "Long live the Jewish State." Such readiness to take grave risks to express a moment of innocent feeling was very touching to the members of the Legation.

No comment had appeared in the Russian press in regard to the Jewish demonstrations during the High Holidays but undoubtedly notice had been taken. There was no law against attending synagogue, though it would probably have been un-

healthy for a person with a responsible post to be seen there. A few ancient Jews might go harmlessly and mutter their prayers. It was certainly not the thing for Soviet youth. The spontaneous mass outpouring shortly after the Legation's arrival was evidence of a tremendous surge of sentiment which still remains alive after more than thirty years of ruthless Soviet extirpation of the Zionist movement and the study of Hebrew "as a tool of British imperialism" and "bourgeois nationalism." The Soviet recognition of Israel had stirred a momentary hope that interest in the fate of the Jewish people might no longer be suspect. At any rate, during September and October, the first two months of the Legation's residence in Moscow, many Jews naively sent cables of congratulation and letters of inquiry to the Legation. Some even wanted to know if they could go to Israel. But this open expression stopped abruptly after the synagogue episode. Word had probably gone out that such goings on were inadvisable. After October few dared raise their heads when the Israelis came to the synagogue and there were no enthusiastic crowds. None of the normal interest in kin and people, innocent sentiments, routine in any other country, were permissible. Even at the Yiddish Theater, where the Israelis had been enthusiastically surrounded the first time they came, not a soul ventured to approach during the intermission.

On one occasion, attendance at the Yiddish Theater was a particularly painful experience for the Israelis. The play dealt with the revolt of the Warsaw Ghetto. A stirring theme but here, too, history was being re-written Soviet style. According to the version presented, the Jews of the Ghetto had not revolted of their own accord. They had been aroused by a Polish messenger who arrived to encourage the Jews and lecture them on the need to resist the Nazis. This travesty of the most tragic and heroic moment in

modern Jewish history had to be watched unprotestingly by the Israelis. That the falsification, offensive to the memory of the Jewish martyrs, was composed in Yiddish only served to increase the sense of degradation. Golda had to maintain a diplomatic silence but, years later, when the infamous "doctors' plot" was staged in Moscow, she could passionately remind the Ghetto survivors in Israel, some of whom had joined the pro-Soviet Mapam, of how their story was told in Russia.

In addition to the stirring demonstration during the High Holidays another incident which made a great impression on Golda and her staff took place in the first fluid period after the Legation's arrival. On November 7, the revolutionary holiday, Molotov held a large reception at his home in honor of the day. All the legations were invited. Formal dress was required, a circumstance which was particularly painful to Sara and Jael Namir, the fifteen-year-old daughter of the Legation's Consul. Jael had been invited according to protocol, since her father was a widower. The girl, who had been brought up in the Palestinian youth movement, felt that the wearing of an evening dress and stockings would be a betrayal of her egalitarian principles and a surrender to the bourgeoisie. A quarter of a century earlier many Russian boys and girls of the revolutionary movement would have sympathized with the Israeli girl's scruples. Jael begged for a compromise costume of a long dress and white socks, but finally the needs of diplomacy prevailed.

At the reception Golda was received by Molotov in a room reserved for the heads of legations while the guests of lesser rank milled around in other rooms. After a few minutes Mrs. Molotov, accompanied by a secretary, came up to Golda in a friendly manner and said: "I have been looking for you." The two women began seeking a common language when Mrs.

Molotov announced: "I speak Yiddish." Golda asked her, in Yiddish, whether she was Jewish. Mrs. Molotov answered: *Ich bin a Yiddishe tochter*, a phrase with warmer overtones than "I am Jewish."

Mrs. Molotov seemed to be genuinely affected by the meeting with Golda and made no attempt to conceal her emotion. She mentioned the High Holiday episode: "I hear you went to the synagogue; that was good. Jews wanted so much to see you."

They discussed various matters, including the boundaries of the Negev which the United Nations was debating at the time. Golda remarked: "I can't give up the Negev; my daughter lives there and she won't allow it." Just then Namir told them that the girls were in the next room. Mrs. Molotov said impulsively: "I must see them," and went to talk to them. She was charmed and intrigued by the blonde, blue-eyed girls who were practicing socialism in a Utopian enclave in the Middle East. She was very curious about the social organization of the cooperative farms and plied Sarele with questions about her kibbutz in the Negev. Of course, neither Jael nor Sara could speak Yiddish. Native-born *sabras*, they knew only Hebrew but Namir translated their replies into Yiddish. Mrs. Molotov seemed to be fascinated by the notion that Jews were in agriculture and that they had an army, but when Sarele told her that at Revivim there was complete communal ownership of property, Mrs. Molotov shook her head: "That's not good," she said. "People won't go there if they have to share everything. We are against that."

As she heard Sarele describe the youth movement, she commented: "Just like the *Narodniki*; you go to the people the way we did." To which the usually shy Sarele replied matter-of-factly: "We don't go to the people. We are the people." Mrs. Molotov advised Sarele to study the writings of Stalin, assuring her that they would make her very happy.

Finally, the secretary reminded Mrs. Molotov that she had to get back to her guests. Those present report that she parted from the two young *sabras* with tears in her eyes.

When she returned to her official receiving line she was still full of her discovery. She kept introducing Golda and referring to the girls as if anxious to show them off. Her final words to Golda were: *Soll eich sein gut. Oib eich vet sein gut, vet sein gut alle Yiden auf der welt*. ("May things go well with you. If all will be well with you, things will go well for Jews in the whole world.")

Mrs. Molotov's public enthusiasm created a sensation. Various diplomats of the satellite countries came up to Golda and told her that they had Jewish wives. In any other country further expressions of friendliness would have followed naturally. But that was the sole contact. Golda never heard again from Mrs. Molotov. "That evening she was a Jewish woman," Golda said. However, in Mrs. Molotov, as in the masses of Moscow Jewry, the moment of spontaneous expression was followed by a prudent restraint whether self- or super-imposed. Subsequent reports from Russia indicated that Mrs. Molotov fell out of favor and was sent into exile, from which she was recalled after Stalin's death. The reasons are a matter of conjecture.

On the basis of these experiences the Israelis were convinced that the Soviet Government had not succeeded in eradicating Jewish consciousness among its Jewish citizens. The Russian authorities apparently came to the same conclusion.

Though the decree outlawing Zionist activities had been in force since 1919, a safe form of Jewish nationalism has been permitted. Hebrew had been proscribed but Yiddish was not banned. Biro-Bidjan had been proclaimed an autonomous Jewish territory in 1934. On that occasion President Kalinin expressed himself in



terms reminiscent of a Zionist tract: "The Jews now will become consolidated and acquire all the attributes of a nation. This will give impetus to the blossoming of Jewish culture. Personally I believe that in about ten years hence Biro-Bidjan will be the cultural center of the Jewish masses..." Nationalist sentiment was ideologically correct when directed toward the wastes of Biro-Bidjan far beyond the Urals, but criminal heresy when centered on Palestine.

Despite Kalinin's prophecy no Jewish center developed in Biro-Bidjan. The Soviet formula, "national in form, socialist in content," was energetically applied to the host of peoples within the Soviet borders. The languages and traditions of obscure and backward Mongolian tribes were earnestly fostered, only the Jewish minority had to ignore its history and had to adapt its cultural strivings to the pattern cut out by the Soviet. Yiddish, free from the historical and religious associations of centuries, was officially designated as the Jewish language. Sholem Aleichem could be read but not *Job* or *Isaiah*.

The Yiddish publications and the Yiddish Theater faithfully toed the government line. The authorities had no complaints on this score. The Yiddish journalists maintained a discreet silence about the Jewish massacres during the Nazi-Soviet pact. The passionate lamentations of an Ehrenburg rent the air only after Germany attacked its partner. However, despite the good behavior of the few remaining Jewish bodies, government tolerance came abruptly to an end. In January, 1949, the newspaper *Einigkeit*, the publishing press *Emes*, and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were shut down. This ended the last vestiges of organized Jewish expression in Soviet Russia.

The liquidation took place within five months after the arrival of the Israel Legation. No one knows whether the measures were prompted by the demonstrations which greeted the Israelis or whether these merely speeded up the process. The fact that after thirty-one years of repression masses of Russian Jews had hailed Golda as the symbol of Jewish renaissance had been a disturbing revelation. That the demonstrations had taken place in the naive faith that Soviet recognition of Israel boded a new era, and had stopped as soon as government displeasure had been indicated, did not alter the case apparently. Jewish interest in the fate of the Jewish people outside the Iron Curtain was not wholly dead; therefore, anything likely to foster the sense of Jewish identity had to go, even such faithful Communist tools as *Einigkeit* and *Emes*. Other minorities might be encouraged to exist as entities or communities, but for the Jews, red assimilation had to be total.

From the Soviet point of view Russian Jewry had displayed an abnormal interest in the Israel Legation. Contact with foreigners, evidences of "cosmopolitanism," were tantamount to treason. The Israel Legation had to respect the desires of its host. The kind of natural rapport which existed between Israel legations and the Jewish community in the United States or other countries was out of the question in Soviet Russia. After the first two months none but purely formal inquiries were received at the Legation. Its work was no more and no less circumscribed than that of any other legation in Soviet Russia. There were a series of routine duties to be performed and little else. Of necessity, the Israelis led a self-sufficient existence with social contacts limited to fellow diplomats of friendly countries. The Russians were polite but distant.

# Book Reviews

## History and *Zeitgeist*

By JACOB B. AGUS

"B'MIFNEH HADOROTH," (Hebrew) by Ben Zion Dinur—384 pages—Mosad Bialik, Jerusalem, 1955.

The scientific study of history is one of the chief expressions of the modern mind. It reflects our keen awareness of the factors which condition human thinking, as well as our constant endeavors to overcome our own subjective predispositions. We take it for granted that all ancient institutions and documents should be studied in the light of the historical circumstances in which they emerged. No man is ever completely objective, in the sense of being free from the prevailing modes of thought in his day. And this judgment includes the historian as well as the historian's critic. No historian can embrace in one mental sweep all the relevant factors of any concrete situation. He discerns a pattern of meaning in the flux of events by the tendency to see clearly only "highlights," those facts and forces which appear particularly prominent from the peculiar vantage point of his generation. The historian aims at the ideal of perfect objectivity, but this ideal cannot ever be fully attained by one who is truly an interpreter, not merely a chronicler. In practice, the historical writings of any one age reflect faithfully its prevailing spirit and essential philosophy. A great historian tells us as much about the *Zeitgeist* of his own generation as he does about the subjects of his inquiry. He does not fully escape the limitations of subjectivity, but his limitations are the compelling realities of his generation. Hence, he is the philosopher or prophet for his contemporaries illustrating his message, not by the subtleties of metaphysics but by lessons from the past.

Professor Ben Zion Dinur, who has long been a meticulous and sensitive historian, reveals himself in this book as a faithful exponent of the spirit of our times. In this collection of essays about the turning points of modern Jewish history, the rise of Hassidism and the Emancipation, Professor Dinur demonstrates how a new vantage point transforms our view of the past. The most dramatic phenomenon of our generation is the mighty mass-movement of Zionism, culminating in the establishment of the State of Israel. For a Jewish historian of our day, this climactic achievement of national rebirth becomes inevitably the towering summit from which the entire panorama of Jewish life through the ages is viewed. The newly gained standpoint is reflected in the author's revaluation of the major movements of the modern era. The combination of penetrating insight, scrupulous standards of sociological analysis and a rare multilingual erudition results in a series of beautiful essays that can only be described as delightful intellectual fare. Our interest is riveted almost constantly by the steadiness of scholarly judgment, the multitude of illustrations and, above all, by the fullness of new vision that characterizes the work of Professor Dinur.

In the very first essay of this collection, the author points out that the frustration and confusion of the Sabbataian movement marked the beginning of the modern era in Jewish life. At first sight, this assertion appears grotesque, for what can be more medieval than the pseudo-messianic madness of Sabbattai Zevi? But, the author challenges to take account of the hidden stratum of reality, that is the sociological counterpoint of the Freudian subconscious. The myth of Sabbattai Zevi was a tissue of falsehoods, but behind the myths there was the awakened sense of

imminent redemption, and this massive social force was bound to seek new instruments of expression. The "holiness of life" was experienced by tens of thousands, putting the age-old ideal of the "Sanctification of the Name" in question. The Messiah with all his glorious promise had almost come. Only a little more effort was needed to carry him over the mystic threshold and into the world of reality. A new sense of "activism" was born, in the struggle for redemption—the feeling which eventually developed into the modern Zionist movement. It is interesting to note that the sectarian Nehemia Hiyun, for whose benefit Graetz ransacked the vocabulary of abuse, is quoted by Professor Dinur as a representative of the newly awakened mass-feeling of "activism": "It is possible for a human being to arouse the process of redemption . . ."

In accordance with this insight, the author elaborates most carefully the thesis that the modern era of Jewish life was opened in the year 1700, when Rabbi Judah the Hassid led a thousand of his followers into the Holy Land. In that event visionary mysticism bubbled over into the world of reality, a mass-movement involving Jews in various countries was born and the first elements of organization along ideological lines were exhibited. To Graetz, the modern era opened in the year 1750, the time when Moses Mendelssohn, the exponent of enlightenment and the symbol of the modern Jew, dominated the horizon in Germany. To Dubnow, the most decisive event was the French Revolution which enfranchised the Jew and turned him into a citizen of modern Europe. To Professor Dinur, the climax of all Jewish history is the emergence of the State of Israel in 1948. Hence the first stirrings of Jewish feelings in the direction of settlement in Israel should be recognized as the opening salvos of the modern era. With Rabbi Judah the Hassid, the forerunner of modern Zionism, the catastrophic nature of Jewish life in exile came to be experienced not only as a punishment for past errors, but as the collective

and specific *sin* of the Jewish people, the sin which stands in the way of redemption. Even so radical an opponent of the Sabbataian heresy as Rabbi Jacob Emden could write, "we have forgotten Jerusalem and ignored it in our hearts, therefore we too were forgotten like the dead."

Guided by the conviction that the longing to return to the land of Israel is the one dominant reality in the souls of Jewish people throughout the ages, the author casts brilliant illumination upon the obscure beginnings of the Hassidic movement. Since every idea that is attributed to the Baal Shem Tov was already adumbrated in the writings and practices of the Lurianic Cabbalists, what was it that was new, revolutionary and explosive in the Hassidic movement? In answer, the author carefully builds up the thesis that the Hassidic movement sought to transform the entire Jewish people into one society, "a community of saints" and a "generation of knowledge," which would be deserving of the coming of the Messiah. If a select company of saints could learn to become semi-prophets, recipients of the "Holy Spirit," and if the masses of the Jewish people could "bind themselves" closely to these Masters, then the congregation of Israel would become once again a fit dwelling place for the *Shechinah*, and the return of the *Shechinah* to Israel is equivalent to the advent of the Messiah. For there are three forms of exile, which are interrelated—the exile of the soul into the domain of evil desire, the exile of the *Shechinah* into the world dominated by the "princes of the nations," and the exile of the Jewish people from their homeland. To overcome this threefold exile, a threefold love is needed—love of God, love of the people Israel, and love of the Torah. The saint is the person in whom this threefold love has achieved a perfect triumph, so that he is, in a real sense, a living precursor of the Messianic world. By "binding themselves" to the saint, believing in him as the Israelites in the wilderness believed in Moses, the

entire Jewish people could be lifted automatically, as it were, into the realm of the Messiah. The Baal Shem Tov thought of himself as partaking of the "category of Elijah the Prophet" and of the "category of Moses," who was the first Messiah or Redeemer. As an Elijah, he helped prepare the people for "the Spirit of Holiness." In turn, the "Spirit of Holiness" would prepare the way for the Messiah as the presence of Moses made redemption from Egypt possible.

This interpretation of the early stages of Hassidism centers upon the explanation of the Baal Shem Tov's decision not to migrate to the Land of Israel. In keeping with his fundamental approach, the author seizes upon the Baal Shem Tov's initial decision to go to Palestine and his subsequent renunciation of this effort as the key-events in the life of the "holy society" of Hassidim. The desire to migrate to the Holy Land was natural for the pietists of Brod, who sought to make themselves fit "dwelling places" for the *Shechinah*. Many authorities maintained that the *Shechinah* does not manifest itself to any person, no matter how worthy, outside the boundaries of the Land, which, as Halevi put it, is alone "suited for prophecy." Though Rabbi Joseph Karo enjoyed visions of a heavenly teacher (*Maggid*) when he was still in Turkey, he was then preparing to go to the Land of Israel. And the young Luzzato was prohibited from indulging in "visions" before he settled in the Holy Land. Thus, several members of the Hassidic society of Brod left Poland and settled in the city of Safed.

The Baal Shem Tov prepared to follow their example, when, as a result of certain visions and mystical experiences, he changed his mind. And this decision to remain in the lands of exile provided the impetus for the growth of the Hassidic movement. The saint, who aspires to bring the Messiah, must stay with the people and descend from his high levels to share their travail and yearning. Was not Moses told to go down to Egypt in order to redeem his people? It is necessary for the saint to become "sinful in

himself" (*mehuyov beatzmo*) in order to retain his "participation with the masses of the people" (p. 224).

Judging by his own mystical experiences, the Baal Shem Tov taught that the *Shechinah* was eager to come to saints even in Exile. He even declared that in our day "it is easy to receive the Holy Spirit." As to the many statements in our sacred literature that the *Shechinah* does not appear outside the Holy Land, the Baal Shem Tov proclaimed the principle that a person is in the place upon which his thought is fixed. It is possible to live in Poland and think of "the Land of Israel," thereby preparing oneself for the *Shechinah* (p. 194).

The exact rationalization of the Baal Shem Tov is of minor significance. It is important to remember only that his decision against the journey to the Holy Land became the basis of his program for the redemption of the Jewish people. When, in a famous vision, the Messiah told him that redemption depended upon all the people's accepting his teaching and incorporating his ideas into their lives, the Baal Shem Tov realized that the Messiah would not arrive for a long time. Accordingly, he set out to organize the entire Jewish Diaspora into a "unified society of saints," in which the masses are "bound to" those who experience visions of the Holy Spirit.

Of course, the psychology of the Baal Shem Tov hardly accounts for the rapid growth of the Hassidic movement. Professor Dinur analyzes the various factors which led to the disintegration of the Jewish institutions of self-government in Poland. Hassidism became a powerful mass movement because, in its initial, revolutionary phases, it provided the intellectual façade for the widespread opposition to the entrenched communal authorities.

In sum, this collection of essays on the turning point of modern Jewish history demonstrates the fruitfulness of the new approach of Israeli historians. Viewing the whole travail of the Jewish people through the prism of newly won inde-



pendence, they are likely to uncover fresh meaning in facts and situations that were previously overlooked. This is all to the good. At the same time, it is well to remember that other standpoints are possible, which reveal Sabbataism, Hasidism and the Emancipation in a totally different light. Much is revealed to the gaze of the historian when he surveys the tumultuous course of Jewish life from the standpoint of Israel reborn, seeking the inner dynamism of events in the ceaseless longing of the people for national rehabilitation. But, this powerful searchlight conceals quite as much as it reveals. In the case of the Baal Shem Tov, for instance, it is necessary to take account of the psychology of mysticism, which is a universal phenomenon. The Baal Shem's teachings and the reason for their peculiar effectiveness can only be understood by studying the lives of Christian mystics and the careers of mystical societies generally. Things Jewish are inevitably two-sided, to be seen truly only when they are viewed both from without and within. All who wish to understand the background of modern Jewish life will find this book immensely valuable and enlightening.

As a general rule, Professor Dinur, by reason of his familiarity with many cultures and his detailed, empirical approach, steers clear of the pitfalls of parochialism. His historical essays, of which this volume is the first in a projected series of seven volumes, are of intense interest to the educated layman as well as to the scholar. All who wish to understand the background of modern Jewish life and to appreciate the spirit of Israeli scholarship at its best will put this book on their "must" list.

## Faith or Functionalism?

By BERNARD ROSENBERG

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM: AN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT by Marshall Sklare. The Free Press. \$4.50.

As a rule, the sociological literature on religious life in America is both skimpy and lopsided. It has generally focused

upon the small but colorful sect, stressing eccentricity rather than the common forms of worship. Hence, one welcomes Marshall Sklare's dissertation—or that portion of it included in this book—as a study devoted to the fastest growing indigenous movement in American Judaism. The author has collected valuable data in an exemplary manner. If he had been able to preserve his sense of detachment from a group with which he is in obvious sympathy, it would have been possible to generate even more enthusiasm for this work. He spends much of his time praising Conservatism in the jargon of social science, first by observing carefully what goes on, then by describing it as "functional." Sklare finds very little that is "dysfunctional," i.e., undesirable, about the workings of Conservative Judaism. The pragmatic attitude which, however incongruously, underlies so much religious behavior in America, also animates Sklare's report.

Sklare's positive tone may also stem, in part, from the spirit of an age that has nearly forsaken self-criticism in its glorification of the middle position. In view of this tendency, it is natural that Sklare should select Conservative Judaism as the subject matter of his investigation. For he notes, Conservatism is "the centrist wing [of Judaism, which] caters to those who cannot accept Orthodox traditionalism, but who at the same time find themselves alienated by Reform radicalism." Sklare is aware, however, that lately Orthodox traditionalism is more receptive to modern innovation and Reform radicalism, now frequently styled Progressive or Liberal Judaism, has taken to restoring certain old rites and customs. One subgroup introduces English into the service, another returns to Hebrew liturgy, a third "synthesizes" everything, and presently, they all meet—in the middle.

Perhaps no institution is more thoroughly saturated with the mid-century ethos than American Judaism. Its several branches, often characterized by greater diversity within than between them, are like political parties in the United States. Reconstructionists, i.e., members of the latitudinarian Conservative movement,

whose opponents inside and outside the same movement think of them as demolitionists, are somewhat to the left of most Reform Jews. They have all but abolished God either by neglect in favor of social work or by transforming Him—the God of Wrath, the Jealous God, the God of Love—into a metaphysical essence or an ethical impulse. Not that all factions agree upon the nebulousness or incorporeality of God. There are notions all the way from God the Cipher through God the anthropomorphic Being, to God the Person. The point is that a man's religious affiliation does not unequivocally suggest his approach to this or other matters of belief. I may know that you pay your dues to a Conservative synagogue the way you enroll as a Democrat: your convictions will be as much a mystery to me in one case as in the other.

With all that Kaplan and his supporters have tried to do, abortively here, successfully there, Conservatism also has a right wing whose members are more traditional in their orientation than many Orthodox Jews. Conservative Judaism, as Sklare makes very clear, embraces every variety of American Jew from the one who merely wants to play pinochle with some regularity or who wishes to fraternize with other Jews only because he has been rebuffed at a country club, to that rare bird, the truly devout human being. There is room for everybody; such spaciousness is characteristic of Conservatism only a little more so than of Orthodoxy and Reform.

In short, the religious picture is a hodgepodge. Formal demarcations have very little meaning in such a loosely structured configuration. That they are "traditionalists all and innovators all," that there can be no sure way of telling them apart, is "how it should be," according to Joseph L. Blau who so declares himself in the course of an essay on the spiritual life of American Jewry. Sklare implicitly agrees.

To be gratified by the vagueness of religious labels is simply to echo political science on the question of party labels: emptiness is better than any specific content. If you believe something with enough intensity to join an organization

of like-minded persons, this will produce conflict. Such a consummation should be avoided like the plague. Ours is supposed to be a society of "voluntary" associations, but a dominant American model of the good life is one in which harmonious relationships obviate all inner and outer conflict. To be sure, a frictionless social order cannot be attained short of full totalitarianism. Yet, practically the whole of applied sociology, not to say psychology, is devoted to the reduction or the elimination of conflict.

Before the current permissiveness developed, Judaism, like Christianity or Confucianism, implied at least a body of doctrine uncritically accepted by the communicants of that religion. At present in Conservative Judaism there is a deliberate avoidance of all "ideology," a word Sklare uses interchangeably with theology. In his study of one community located on the eastern seaboard—not surprisingly, a *middle-sized* community, Jewish population 10,000—where intensive interviews were conducted, Sklare finds that, "No approaches of a philosophical nature are apparent. Rather adherents generally stress the agreeableness of the Conservative service." Sklare points to a discontinuity between the relatively abstract, if somewhat scientific, training the rabbis have received as seminarians, and their later immersion in practical affairs, which leaves neither "time nor incentive" for further study. The Schoolmen, (as Sklare calls their teachers), many of them still Europeans, are rather contemptuous of these Rabbis. This sets up a certain strain, but Sklare is confident that it will be ironed out as soon as the Seminary staff is wholly Americanized. There will also be curricular changes, the better to prepare Conservative rabbis for a role that may often seem humiliating to them (when the author says they "cater" to the congregation, his choice of words is apposite) but which Sklare considers somehow ennobling.

One respondent in this sample *does* philosophize as follows:

I believe in the Conservative type of services rather than the strictly Orthodox. Actually Conservative means conserving, conserving of time, from the way services are conducted. That's from my experience in Orthodox synagogues.

Another remarks:

I guess you would say they (the Conservatives) are midway between nothing and something. I don't know how else to put it. I never thought before to define it.

Or again:

They don't go to the extreme, say sometimes on Saturday you're not supposed to do any work, well, we would put out the lights and not think of that as work, and when we go out and eat, we wouldn't hesitate to order a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich.

Ordinary members respond this way. What of their lay leaders? Sklare says that many of them are too apathetic to care about ideological clarity and others are afraid of it because any sharpening of principles might promote dissension. Need it even be said that when Jews develop so strong a distaste for theory they have been pretty thoroughly de-Judaized and pretty thoroughly Americanized? Once the religious sphere enveloped all of a Jew's activities; then for a while it was organically related to everything he did. Even as he moved out of the ghetto, his love of learning and of the controversy to which it gave rise, was undimmed; this, more than any other trait, gave him his special character. If he could not be a *Talmud chochom* or later on, some other kind of *chochom*, he respected, even revered, the man who was one. It is a tribute to the enormous coercive power of America that we have swallowed an entirely different value system which goes down our throats as easily as—a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich. Those who foster unreasoning congregational membership do it in the name of Jewish survival, and this is the final irony. For, if in order to attract Jews, you must empty the synagogue of Jewishness while peopling it with *am haratzim*, what is there to preserve? Are survivalists talking sense when they assume that Jewish civilization can remain intact after it has abandoned the intellectual process?

Sklare refers to some of the propaganda literature distributed by Conservatives. On that basis he notices a marked contrast: "According to tradition, the Jew should observe the Sabbath because it is God's will that he do so. In appealing for a reinvigoration of the holy day, Conservatism, however, speaks in terms of social *utility*—in this case, the potential contribution of observance to mental health." Joseph Zeitlin had found in 1945, in a survey cited by Sklare, that the views of 81% of the Conservative Rabbis (and 80% of the Reform Rabbis) expressed a naturalistic rather than a supernaturalistic bias. Rabbis with a naturalistic bias! Could this be why their publicists make out a "psychological" case for Sabbath observance? If so, how far is it possible to go with the misappropriation of Freudian psychology? Can one mix naturalism and supernaturalism? Clearly, it is possible for a man to compartmentalize these antipathetic world views: Isaac Newton wrote the *Principia* and *The Topography of Hell*, but he did not supernaturalize his physics or naturalize his theology. Only the Age of Unreason could create such a fusion. Scientists from Eddington on have contributed their share; today it is the special preserve of psychiatrists. But, clergymen—priests, ministers and rabbis—have not been behindhand.

It happens that Sigmund Freud was never less ambiguous than in his metapsychological reflections on religion which, except for a moment in his old age, he regarded as an illusion, a psychopathological symptom, one to be banished along with all the other irrational baggage in man's mind. The formulation is explicit: where Id was let ego be. And God, a projection of the earthly father, is firmly embedded in the Id, in that portion of the unconscious which is full of demons. That they should be dislodged for good, Freud never seriously doubted. He was gloomy about the prospects of ever being able to do so. But psychoanalysis as Freud expounded it means nothing less than the establishment of maximal rationality. Such an end cannot be achieved without treating religion as the prime antagonist it always was for Freud. Despite

the popularity of his ideas in America, Freud was hostile to this country. Perhaps he had a vision of the day when men who were commonly regarded as orthodox Freudians would argue that Freudianism and organized religion were compatible, and more, that one was indispensable to the other.

A large part of the Rabbinate seems to have accepted this absurd thesis even though it does as much violence to their own putative beliefs as to Freud's. Only after they have been eviscerated and then placed unnaturally in the same bed, are these two enemies able to provide what neither would have promised independently: Peace of Mind. The consolation of adjustment, such as Sklare finds in the Conservative movement, is also Liebmanism or Menningerism; it is not Freudianism and it is not Judaism. It is the perversion of both. You will not find it in Freud. You will not find it, for that matter, among the medieval Schoolmen. You will certainly not find it in the Biblical patriarchs, Moses, Nehemiah, the prophets, Hillel, Shamaï, Rambam, or the *gaonim* who followed them. You will find it in the American synagogue. There the climate is conciliatory and a firm commitment to anything substantial is too unpleasant for contemplation. We have Marshall Sklare to thank for confirmation of this melancholy fact.

## Isaac Babel—A Jew on Horseback

By S. SHUNRA

THE COLLECTED STORIES OF ISAAC BABEL: edited and translated by Walter Morison. Criterion Books, N. Y. 381 pp. \$5.00.

**I**n 1917 and 1918, when I was a child of eight and nine in a small town in the Ukraine, a strange thing happened. All the numerous Jewish young men who dodged the draft for the Czarist army, came out of their hiding places and volunteered for the armed forces. Some joined the still regular Kerensky army;

others waited a while and enthusiastically joined first the Red Guard and later the newly formed Red Army. They were motivated by a variety of factors. Of course, there was budding and tentative patriotism for the new regime which promised freedom, equality, national autonomy, etc. But that was not all. There was also an upsurge of formerly repressed violence, which now sought outlet. The anger which burst out was directed not only at the "enemy"—pogrom bands roving in the country, capitalist "oppressors" in the towns and cities, Germany and Poland, the national enemies of Russia with which the new regime was successively at war. It was directed with equal force inwardly. The young Jews of Russia, of the Ukraine in particular, were angry with themselves, they rejected their past, their environment, their families, their culture to which they sometimes paid lip service but whose hold was already losing its strength. They were angry with themselves for everything they had been, and they wanted to be different. The essence of the difference consisted in violence. Whereas formerly they had been meek and mild students, more often than not *externes* studying on their own and hoping some day to be admitted to an official school, they now turned "anti-culturists," they jeered at their own refinements, they scoffed at their spectacles, the symbol of their intellectuality, and glorified the mighty arm. The military uniform, formerly feared and despised, now attracted powerfully (especially since, for a time, it ceased being a strait-jacket of discipline and was more often than not an incoherent agglomeration of items of dress distinguished only by a rapidly fading red armband). The horse—for reasons which Freudians would not find hard to explain—became a cherished symbol of the new release from old and now rejected emotional disciplines. Formerly, any Russian army unit quartered in a town was a source of dread to the Jewish population, and the presence of a Cossack cavalry detachment was looked upon as unmitigated misfortune. Now it was precisely the Red Cavalry that was most admired. Budenny's often undisciplined mounted hosts (some



of whose units were not entirely averse to a little old-fashioned looting) enjoyed an aura of romantic glory not shared by any of the other services of the young regime. And many young Jews of the Ukraine, whose acquaintance with horses out of harness had always been maintained at a safe distance, now romantically dreamed of becoming cavalymen.

Isaac Babel, the lost author of this volume of collected stories (he disappeared around 1936 and is believed to have perished in a Soviet concentration camp a short time later) became such a cavalryman in Budenny's mounted army, and his brief, compact, lyrical, yet ironic tales, many of which are mere thumbnail sketches, are the best documentary of the mood and the inner conflicts of that period.

Babel is a first-rate artist. An expatriate from the traditional Jewish middle-class life of Odessa, he is aware of his bohemian detachment from both Jewish and Russian folk life, and his stories and sketches are suffused with sharp irony. He seeks synthesis in the new revolution, but even as he ridicules the old fashioned orthodoxy he cannot help but sneer at the clumsy and stupid new bolshevik orthodoxy that seeks to supplant it. His description of an overzealous Jewish communist commissar ("He was a lengthy individual in riding-breeches and cavalry boots") who brings charges against his mother-in-law and the local *mohel* for having circumcised his new-born son in his absence and having named him Yankel instead of Karl ("in honor of our teacher Karl Marx") is a masterpiece of irony at the expense of the fresh priesthood of the new communist faith. Indeed, it is remarkable that Babel was not liquidated when he wrote it in the twenties.

But it is in his major encounter with violence, not the violence of war, but the basic violence of the "Cossack," violence as a constant element in one's daily existence, that Babel probes the greatest depth. He appears to glorify the Cossack, the "noble savage," the man whose deepest relationship is with his horse for whom he reserves his tenderest sentiments. He claims that he wants to emulate the Cossack. He wants to ride like him, he wants

to be able to kill like him, passionately, methodically, relishing the act. But even when he romanticizes the handsome, daring Cossack, he is aware that it is a role truly unattainable to him as a man of sensibility, and his sharpest irony is directed against himself, the uprooted Jewish intellectual, for trying to find the wholeness he is seeking in a primitivism that borders on savagery. In the story "My First Goose" Babel tells how the Cossack platoon to which he is assigned rejects him at first as a weakling pen-pusher who wears glasses and reads a newspaper. To prove himself he kills in a particularly vicious manner the only goose of the woman in whose house he and his fellow-warriors are quartered, and disregarding her tears threateningly orders her to cook it for him. The others look on and accept him as one of their own. They invite him to join them at their kettle, from which they first drove him away, and later they all sleep together on the ground. But Babel slyly hints that their acceptance of him was not genuine. His frenzied and melodramatic act of brutality did not make him one of them. The violence which in them was native and innocent, like that of a beast of prey, was a staged gesture on his part.

In "Argamak" he tells how he was assigned the horse of a Kuban Cossack. Horse and man suffered from the arrangement. Babel was tormented by the pain of the dumb beast and also by self-consciousness—the others saw that he was a poor horseman. He had nightly dreams that he rode well, so well in fact that no one paid any attention to him. In the end he learned to ride well enough not to attract attention. "The Cossacks stopped watching me and my horse." But again he slyly leaves the reader in doubt whether they stopped watching him because he rode like one of them or because they had written him off as a real horseman and lost interest in his attempts.

(Around 1930 I encountered Babel's counterpart, a young Jewish writer of that generation, in a kibbutz in Palestine. He had not read Babel. He told me: "When I first came here it was my greatest am-

bition to become a good horseman, as good as a Bedouin [the Mid-Eastern counterpart of the Cossack primitive]. Every Saturday, for months on end, I practiced behind the stable." The Palestinian counterpart of Babel likewise attained his goal and was acknowledged a good horseman, and nobody looked at him when he rode by. Like Babel's, his victory, too, was ephemeral. He remained unsatisfied. The desire to be at one with strength and innocent violence was unfulfilled. When I met him he half-jokingly undertook to raise up a new fierce breed of dogs in the Jewish settlements. He acquired a puppy and named it "Devourer." Alas, six months later, when the puppy approached maturity, it turned out to be the most timid creature within a radius of many miles and ran to hide whenever anyone approached it.)

Despite his studied detachment from his subject matter, as befits a true artist, especially one in revolt against himself, Babel betrays, intentionally perhaps, his basic fidelity to the values which he does not acknowledge in his stories, values that are alien to the spirit of revolution on the march. In "A Letter" an untutored Russian peasant boy describes how his father, who had joined the White Guard, murdered one of his brothers, and was killed in turn by his second brother who served with Budenny. The boy's account is naive and uninvolved. Life, to him, is a simple matter, and death of little account, and the personal relationship of victim and killer does not matter. The naive boy is presented as a charming, unsophisticated child of nature. But though he tries to maintain a similar air of detachment in describing the home of a Jewish family in Poland where the father was murdered in a pogrom just before the arrival of Budenny's cavalry, an overtone of self-identification rings clearly. The daughter of the murdered man describes how her father had begged the Poles to take him outside and not to kill him before his family, and she concludes: "And now I should wish to know where in the whole world you can find another father like my father?" At this moment Babel ceases to be a cavalryman and takes sides not only

with the woman (and the murdered man) against her persecutors, but also against the cult of innocent violence, against the romanticising of the innocence of violence under any circumstances. And in transcending his artistic detachment, he attains still greater stature as an artist.

## Ritual Music Recaptured

By DARIUS MILHAUD

ANTHOLOGY OF JEWISH MUSIC, compiled and edited by Chemjo Vinaver. Text and commentary in English and Hebrew; frontispiece by Marc Chagall. Edward B. Marks Music Corp. \$10.00.

When a music anthology is published it is important because it expresses the choice of a musician, and when the musician is Chemjo Vinaver his choice is sure to be fascinating. Vinaver is steeped in the Hassidic tradition of Poland and his deep roots in Jewish culture can be felt in this very important work. It is a monument of Ashkenazi religious music, including as it does Biblical cantillation, prayer chants of the synagogue for every festival, psalms, hymns for the Sabbath table, and Hassidic *Nigunim*.

I wish that a similar work could be done for the Sephardi liturgy and folk music.

Among the many musicians who have contributed to this book, not only harmonizing religious or folklore material, but in a free creative way, we find the name of Arnold Schoenberg. His Psalm 130, Opus 50 is one of the best compositions of this great master. It is written on a Sephardi text. It was first published by the Israeli Music Publications in Tel Aviv. The mixing of sung and spoken voices lends it a very beautiful and dramatic character.

Beautifully produced and rich in content, this Anthology takes us through the magnificent halls of a music with which not many are acquainted.

## From the Four Corners

(Continued from page 4)

infinitely more liberal. Bantu tempers are rising. Whole districts—largely slums—inhabited by Africans have been cleared to allow of European suburban expansion, without compensation for freehold rights and improvements. It is dangerous for Europeans to walk in the street at night, even in Johannesburg. Burglaries by natives are reported daily. Flogging has been introduced for car theft, in addition to any other punishment.

The Nationalists of South Africa are driven on by a narrow and dogmatic fundamentalism. Even moderate opinion among the Afrikaners is outraged by this tampering with the Constitution: seventeen professors at the University of Pretoria—a Nationalist stronghold—recently made a public protest. The English-speaking population (including South African Jews) realizes that if the Nationalists can do these things, they can do anything, even declare a Republic and secede from the Commonwealth, like Ireland. A wave of pessimism is overtaking the English-speaking population: some are emigrating to the more liberal atmosphere of the Central African Federation (Rhodesia and Nyasaland); others stay longer and longer in Britain (to which as South Africans they still have right of free entry). Some non-Jews have even inquired whether they could be admitted to Israel.

The main opposition in Parliament to the Nationalists comes from the United Party, Smuts' old party. It is now led by Strauss (not Jewish) and is supported by most of the Jewish population. A few Jews, however, support the Nationalists; some support the small Liberal Party; a few are Communists, now a proscribed movement.

The racial problem in South Africa is far more acute than it has ever been in the United States, due to an important fact: in the United States the whites outnumber the Negro by ten to one; in South Africa the natives outnumber the Europeans by three to one. European South Africa is dominated by physical fear of the native. Yet the Nationalists will not whole-heartedly encourage new European immigration, as they are afraid the new immigrants—even those from

Holland and Germany—will not support their racial theories.

The Nationalists believe that they are the Chosen Race and must rule by force: the native must be wholly separated from the European and kept strictly in his place—the *apartheid* policy. *Apartheid* can be applied socially, politically and economically. The Communists advocate no *apartheid*; the Liberal Party endorses social *apartheid* but favors political and economic integration; the United Party endorses both social and political *apartheid*, but favors economic integration; the Nationalists will have no integration whatsoever. This policy is quite unrealistic, as the mines, the industries (now more important than the mines), the farms and even the European domestic households are all dependent on native labor.

Most liberal opinion in South Africa believes that only an economic slump can dislodge the Nationalist Government. But, at the moment, the country is getting richer and richer. New gold mines are still coming into production, while Uranium has now been found in some of the unused gold mines. South Africa is self-supporting in food, coal and iron, with gold and diamonds as a bonus. Hence, the Nationalists can afford to be impervious to world opinion. Their native policy seems bound to lead in time to severe uprisings, which will engulf the Jewish population as well.

There is much dismay among South African Jews every time a new piece of racial legislation is passed. Yet immigration to Israel remains a trickle, although there are increased inquiries about possibilities there. Thirty out of the hundred Jewish families at the gold-mining center of Welkom recently asked for such information. It is in the smaller towns that the Jews are being inevitably squeezed out by the Afrikaners, who used to be only farmers. Now they are setting up their own co-operatives and are in competition with the Jewish middle-men (as in pre-war Poland). In the cities, Afrikaner doctors and lawyers are increasingly challenging the well-established Jewish doctors and lawyers. It is Nationalist policy for Afrikaners also to enter the world of big business, dominated till now by English and Jewish South Africans. The new Afrikaans Bank—the *Volkskas*—

is a serious competitor to the powerful Barclays Bank. State loans for new industries are more likely to go to a man with an Afrikaans name than to one with an English or Jewish name.

The Nationalists still outwardly maintain a policy of sympathy towards the Jews. They have recently appointed a Jewish judge—a well-known Zionist—to the Supreme Court of South Africa. They continue to show friendliness to Israel and at once put a Constellation plane at Israel's disposal following the shooting down of an Israeli air liner over Bulgaria. But, fundamentally, the Afrikaner is hostile to Englishmen, Catholics and Jews. Before World War II, the Afrikaner press was distinctly pro-Nazi. At the moment, the Nationalist party does not want to split the European vote by an openly anti-Jewish policy. Many Afrikaners, as devout churchmen, have a deep interest in the Holy Land and in the Jews. They have sympathy with any other small people like themselves who challenged British imperialism. But too much reliance cannot be placed on such sentimental attitudes. The Afrikaner Nationalists are hard-headed realists: they seem to be moving inevitably towards a Police State, in which most Jews will find life increasingly intolerable. The writing is on the wall. This may explain the increasing amount of South African Jewish investment in Israel, in spite of the legal difficulties. The owners continue to live in South Africa—on the fat of the land; but their plans are made, and they will try to escape when the right moment comes. May it not then be too late.

## Children Of Israel

By ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

**A**s one looks back on a visit to Israel one feels the outstanding experiment is the achievement in the care of children and young people. Many children came to Israel without their parents; some still do from Morocco.

Before going to Israel this past spring we stopped in the South of France at the two camps, one of them where families from Morocco are housed until their boat comes to take them to Israel, and the other the camp for children who were going

alone to Israel. The children at present stay in this camp about two months to get oriented to the new kind of life they will lead. The psychiatrist told me that he wished very much the Joint Distribution Committee had more money so that the children could stay three or four months longer, because it was such a complete change that they needed much psychological readjustment. The house mother told me that when the children came to the camp most of them had never slept in a bed, or even taken off their clothes at night, and a toothbrush was an unknown implement. In fact, most of the things babies learn in more advanced communities have to be learned by these children at whatever age they leave Morocco.

I noticed one little boy at the camp had a wrist watch, and as most of the children have no belongings I asked if he spoke French, so that I could chat with him. He said he spoke a little so I enquired how long he had been in the camp. He replied that he and his brother had been there five days. I then asked where he got his wrist watch and he replied: "Oh, my father gave it to me when we said goodbye." From the tone of his voice I knew he felt he had left his father and mother forever, and I cheerfully remarked that I hoped his parents would soon join him in Israel. His big eyes opened wide and he said: "We were ten children and seven of us died. My mother felt the evil eye was on her so our parents decided to send me and my brother to Israel to live. My little brother, seven years old, stayed with my mother to die."

All through the camps one sees the children play, and in their lessons there is that feeling given them that going to Israel is going to live, and I think that perhaps is the note on which the whole treatment of the children is centered, and it may be the key to the great success they seem to have had.

I saw many Jewish children in camps in Europe after World War II and I thought it was impossible that any of them should ever become normal, happy people, but today they are doing work all over Israel; they are normal and happy citizens—an achievement which to me is almost miraculous. Of course special attention has to be given to children who came to Israel without their parents, but to meet the ordinary needs of the ordinary families this new country had



to set up schools, hospitals, industrial and agricultural training, and university opportunities. The beautiful university overlooking Jerusalem is no longer available. A new university is being built, but pending the completion of the new campus the work of the university now is being carried on in buildings all over Jerusalem. The leadership of the university has been used in establishing the whole school system.

In Israel there is free and compulsory education for every child from the ages of five to fifteen, but that only begins to tell the tale. All the various organizations which draw their money from other areas of the world have contributed to the care of the children from infancy to maturity. Hadassah has financed hospitals for children in many places in Israel. I saw a babies' home in Haifa on my first visit to Israel which was able to furnish every care for infants who could not receive proper care in the ordinary home surroundings. There are children's villages where the directors practically take the place of parents and, while encouraging great independence and self-reliance in the children, still give them a sense of love and protection which creates a fine group of young citizens for this new country.

I visited schools which were carried on like trade-schools where the child studied four hours a day and did five hours of manual work under a master mason, carpenter, or tinsmith, as the case might be. I saw camps where children came

for short periods to learn special skills. A lesson in running a tractor was going on during my visit and I was told the boys came from various villages not only to learn to run the tractor but how to keep it in order as well.

There are many agricultural schools. These are not always run by the government which perhaps cannot afford to do so; in such cases they are often operated with the help of the Jewish Agency.

In one camp special care is given to children who have psychological difficulties; then they are sent to schools or camps which seem best fitted to correct their particular troubles. The results in such cases, at the older age level, seem to be excellent.

All through these different facilities for preparing the children for citizenship runs a particular inspiration. They know that in Israel there is something for them that meets the longing of their people over thousands of years. They have finally found a homeland where they are free under their own government in which they participate and which gives them a sense of loyalty and devotion which is perhaps keener than what one finds in older countries despite their use of similar techniques.

Many government allocations and a large part of the funds raised by private organizations are spent on the children of Israel, but I think the results justify both the money spent and the effort which has gone into the building of these future citizens.

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### Book Reviewers and Contributors to "From the Four Corners"

**JULIUS HORWITZ**, author of "The City", recently returned from a year's stay in Europe and Israel on a Guggenheim Fellowship.

**EDWIN SAMUEL** spent this summer South Africa.

**ELEANOR ROOSEVELT** visited Israel last spring.

**JACOB B. ACUS** is Rabbi of Beth El Congrega-

tion of Baltimore, Md., and a frequent contributor to Jewish magazines.

**BERNARD ROSENBERG**, formerly on the staff of Brandeis University, now teaches at Harpur College.

**S. SHUNRA** is an editor and writer.

**DARIUS MILHAUD** is the famous composer.

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